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PLAYER'S NAVY CUT CIGARETTES in packets containing 12, and boxes of 24, 50, and 100

The following extract from the "REVIEW OF REVIEWS," Nov. 1890, is of interest to every Smoker:—

THE PIPE IN THE WORKHOUSE.—The picture drawn by our Helper of the poor old man in the workhouse, puffing away at an empty pipe, has touched the hearts of some of our correspondents. One who dates from the High Alps, and signs himself "Old Screw," says: "I have been struck with your suggestion in the October number of the 'Review of Reviews' for a scheme to supply smokers in union workhouses with tobacco. I am afraid, judged by the ordinary standards, I am the most selfish of mortals, as I never give a cent away for purposes of so-called charity; but this scheme of yours appeals at once to the sympathies of a hardened and inveterate smoker. Were I in London, I would at once start a collecting-box for the fund, and levy contributions for it on my smoking acquaintances, but, unfortunately, my business compels me to be a wanderer round the Continent for the next nine months. I can, however, do a little, and would like to contribute a pound of what I consider the BEST SMOKING TOBACCO, viz., 'PLAYER'S NAVY CUT' (this is not an advertisement). I enclose, therefore, a cheque for the amount."

"Cadbury's"

"The Typical Cocoa of English Manufacture, Absolutely Pure."
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Gold Medals, Diplomas, and Highest Awards wherever exhibited, for Absolute Purity, Superiority of Manufacture, and True Flavour.

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THE "HOUSEHOLD TREASURE" BORAX.

CONCENTRATED, SPECIALLY PREPARED, ABSOLUTELY PURE AND SAFE, FOR PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC USES.

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This Borax possesses qualities that are exceptional and unknown to any other substance. It stands alone in its Antiseptic, Decay-arresting, Purifying attributes, and its Safety. It purifies Water, destroys Bacilli, Animalculæ, and Fever Germs, instantly. Renders Water beautifully clear, sweet, pure, and soft, for all Washing, Cleaning, Purifying, and Scouring purposes; especially valuable for Toilet, Bath, and Lavatory. Removes all taint, all mustiness, dry rot, or other decomposition; makes all domestic wares bright, clean, and sweet. Keeps milk pure and sweet, as well as Fresh Meat, Poultry, Game, and Fish; destroys all staleness, removes all taint, prevents waste at once, preserving and improving at same time the untainted parts. Unrivalled for Washing Vegetables and for Cooking purposes. Wherever "Californian" is used, it sweetens, purifies, and improves. By dusting the Skin and rinsing the Clothing in Borax Water all infectious Germs are destroyed.

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PUREST ANTISEPTIC, DECAY ARRESTER, PURIFIER, AND PRESERVER, IN THE WORLD.

SOLD IN BORAX GLAZED JARS WITH COVERS. HOUSEHOLD SIZE, 1s.; TOILET SIZE, 6d. EACH.

The clean, bright style and handiness of the "Borax" Household Glazed Jars emphasises its value as "The Household Treasure," without which no home will be complete. "New" Patent Borax is specially prepared and ready for immediate use. The Toilet Size, by its bright, clean appearance, will commend itself to every lady, while the contents are always ready for immediate use in the dressing room and bath room, with warm, hot, or cold water, and its action is "soft as silk"—"smooth as velvet" on the most delicate skin; leaving purity wherever applied. For Household and Toilet Uses "New" Patent Borax is indeed matchless.

"CALIFORNIAN" BORAX, in addition to its registered Title and Label, is also further known by its special Trade Mark, registered and recognised the standard Brand of Borax purity throughout the civilised world.

"CALIFORNIAN" and PATENT BORAX preparations are sold in Packets convenient and ready for immediate use at Home, on Land, on Water, in all Climates.

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Dirt, Stains, Spots, Specks, Rust, Mould, Sourness, Decay, instantly removed from Household Requisites, Breakfast, Dinner, Tea Things, Dessert and Supper Services, Glasses, Dishes, Plates, Spoons, Knives, Forks, Cooking Vessels, and all other Domestic Articles.

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Hardest Water it purifies instantly, **Dirt** it extracts immediately. **Cleansing** it accomplishes thoroughly. **Purifying** it carries out perfectly and produces "linen white as snow, sweet as new-mown hay." In Quarter Pound, Half, and Pound Packets. **Full** Directions on each.

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Cleanses, Washes, Purifies, Brightens everything—dissolves instantly in hot, warm, or cold water—is pleasant in use—**leaves** like "**new-mown hay**"—and Home indeed "Sweet Home" in comfort and reality. Packets, Quarter Pound, Half Pound, and One Pound, with directions on each.

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THE PATENT FLEXI[illegible] [illegible]DS, Ready for Using with every kind of Starch,

Wonderf[illegible] [illegible] Stiffness, Brilliancy, and Beauty to Muslin, Lace, Linen, Cuffs, [illegible] Pa[illegible] and 3d.; Boxes, 6d. Full directions on each.

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PEARSONS

If you like this number you should buy "Pearson's Weekly," if you don't already do so. You will like that too.

PEARSON'S CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

THREE PENCE] CHRISTMAS, 1892. THREE PENCE.]

AFTER THE BALL.

THEY sat and combed their beautiful hair,
Their long, bright tresses, one by one,
As they laughed and talked in the chamber there,
After the revel was done.

Idly they talked of waltz and quadrille;
Idly they talked, like other girls,
Who over the fire, when all is still,
Comb out their braids and curls.

Robes of satin and Brussels lace,
Knots of flowers and ribbons too,
Scattered about in every place,
And bright with every hue.

And Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
Stockingless, slipperless, sit in the night,
For the revel is done.

Sit and comb their beautiful hair,
Those wonderful waves of brown and gold,
Till the fire is out in the chamber there
And the little bare feet are cold.

Then out of the gathering winter chill,
All out of the bitter winter weather,
While the fire is out and the house is still,
Maud and Madge together,—

Maud and Madge in robes of white,
The prettiest nightgowns under the sun,
Curtained away from the chilly night,
After the revel is done.

Float along in a splendid dream,
To a golden gittern's tinkling tune,
While a thousand lustres shimmering stream
In a palace's grand saloon.

Flashing of jewels and flutter of laces,
Tropical odours sweeter than musk,
Men and women with beautiful faces
And eyes of tropical dusk.

And one face shining out like a star,
One face haunting the dreams of each,
And one voice sweeter than others are,
Breaking into silvery speech.

Telling, through lips of bearded bloom,
An old, old story over again,
As down the royal-bannered room,
To the golden gittern's strain,

Two and two they dreamily walk,
While an unseen spirit walks beside,
And, all unheard in the lovers' talk,
He claimeth one for a bride.

O Maud and Madge, dream on together,
With never a pang of jealous fear.
For, ere the bitter winter weather
Shall whiten another year,

Robed for the bridal, and robed for the tomb,
Braided brown hair and golden tress,
There'll be only one of you left for the bloom
Of the bearded lips to press.

Only one for the bridal pearls,
The robe of satin and Brussels lace,
Only one to blush through her curls
At the sight of a lover's face.

O beautiful Madge in your bridal white,
For you the revel has just begun,
But for her who sleeps in your arms to-night
The revel of life is done.

But, robed and crowned with your saintly bliss,
Queen of Heaven and bride of the sun;
O beautiful Maud, you'll never miss
The kisses another has won.

WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF HIM.

SHE stood looking at him so innocently from under that sprig of mistletoe that still hung in the parlour as a reminder of the Christmas season; she was so pretty, and she was under the mistletoe, and he couldn't help it—he had kissed her.

It was an ungentlemanly and unmanly thing to do. He knew that now, as he remembered her frightened, startled look, and the miserable excuses he had tried to stammer out; yes, and the tears in her eyes, and the little choking sob with which she had received his stumbling apology.

"Who could think she would feel like that about it?" he thought; "dear little innocent!"

And she—after he was gone, she lay down on the sofa and cried—

"I like him so much, and now—to think he should kiss me at last—and then say he didn't mean anything by it. What does he think I stood there for? The idiot!"

SAINTS AS PIN CUSHIONS.

BRETON girls who want to get married go to Sené, near Vannes, and stick pins in the foot of the wooden statue of a saint called St. Uferier, who marries his devotees within the year. The pin must be well pushed, for, if it falls out, the wedding will fall through; and it must be a strong straight pin, for, if it bends, the future husband may be a hunchback or a cripple. This is on the Atlantic coast.

On the Channel, at Ploumanac'h, on a rock accessible at low tide, there is a little shrine supported by four Roman columns, and dedicated to St. Quirec, who landed there from England in the sixth century. His wooden image is stuck full of pins. So is a statue of St. Lawrence near Quintin. Here the pin must stick at the first push, for each failure postpones the marriage for a year.

The same practice has been traced further inland, at Laval, in the ancient province of Maine, where the bare legs and arms of a colossal wooden statue of St. Christopher are covered with pin-holes and pins; and both young men and maidens join in the rite.

There is an old tale told of an idiot who broke the statue of St. Mirli on the eve of his *fête*. In order to conceal his crime, his mother made him take the saint's place.

Now, upon the occasion of his feast there was a great resort of pious pilgrims, who stuck pins in St. Mirli's knee for all sorts of wants. The first few pins of the day happened to be those of children, and did not much hurt the saint's *locum-tenens:* a young girl followed and drew blood; a stout old countrywoman then drove a corking pin so far into the poor idiot's leg that he jumped, howling, over the devout and prostrate bodies, and there and then made a miracle; for St. Mirli is believed to have flown up to heaven.

THE ADVANTAGES OF A SISTER.

HERE is an amusing story about a small boy at a New Year's entertainment. At supper, his mother, yielding to his entreaties, gave him two of the painted figures from the Twelfth-cake, with strict injunctions not to eat them, adding, as an aid to memory, that, if he did devour them, he would most certainly be very ill, and probably might die.

"I'm not sure to die if I eat them?" he asked.

"Not sure," replied his mother, "but in all probability you will," and she went away, on hospitable thoughts intent.

The next day something caused her to recollect the figures, and she asked to see them. Master Jack could produce only one, and, when asked for the other, he remarked casually, "Oh, I gave that to Bertha"—his little sister—"and told her to eat it, and, if she does not die before to-morrow, I mean to eat this one myself!"

The doctor was at once sent for to see what could be done. Fortunately the figure was quite harmless, vegetable colouring having been used; but Master Jack was deprived of his portion of the feast.

ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED PRIZES OFFERED.

AT the foot of page 19 a word is omitted. Readers who care to avail themselves of such offers are invited to fill in the word which they think was left out, and which is in a sealed envelope in the hands of Mr. H. S. Linley, Chartered Accountant, of 124, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

The paragraph from which the word is omitted must be cut out, the word filled in, and the name and address of the sender written on the lower margin of the paper.

Envelopes containing these coupons must be posted so as to reach the offices of *Pearson's Weekly*, Temple Chambers, London, E.C., at latest by first post on Monday, January 2nd, and should be marked XMAS WORD. Mr. Linley's certificate with regard to the word will appear in the ordinary number of *Pearson's Weekly* for week ending January 14th, and those who send the correct word will receive prizes in the following manner:—

To the first person from whom the correct solution comes to hand and to every hundredth afterwards half a sovereign will be forwarded until a hundred half-sovereigns have been disposed of. To the second person, and every eleventh afterwards one of the famous *Pearson's Weekly* pencil-cases will be presented until one thousand of these have been disposed of.

So winners will receive among them one hundred half-sovereigns and one thousand valuable gold-plated pencil-cases.

As it is our intention to present so many prizes it is perhaps scarcely necessary to add that the word omitted is not an out-of-the-way one, as is often the case with the *Pearson's Weekly* MISSING WORD COMPETITIONS.

AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.—She: "Duelling is barbarous and irrational."

The General: "It's just like war but for numbers."

She: "No, it ain't. In war you can lie in wait, or get behind something."

AT the concert: "You have excellent critical taste, and seem to delight in good music. Tell me, then, my friend, why have you never mastered some instrument?" "Alas, my dear fellow, my ear is too delicately strung! I shrink from the horrible prospect of hearing myself learn."

THE story is told that the French sent their officials through a country with instructions to ascertain the names of the rivers, mountains, ruins, &c. On the completion of the map, a very large proportion of the places were found to bear the name Ma'arifsh. The proportion was unnaturally large, and it was strange that ruins and rivers and mountains should all be called Ma'arifsh. Yet all the explorers solemnly assured the authorities that, upon addressing the natives out of their phrase-book in the set sentence, "What is the name of that place?" the Berber, or Zlass, or other Arab had replied, "Ma'arifsh." These mountains and rivers and objects of interest were, in fact, all labelled with the interesting name—in Arabic—"Don't know"—river Don't-know, the Don't-know Mountains, Oued Ma'arifsh, Djebel Ma'arifsh.

AN ODD IMPRISONMENT.

I AM a young physician of limited practice and great ambition. At the time of the incidents I am about to relate my house in London was shared, greatly to my own pleasure and convenience, by a clever young German whose acquaintance I had made in the hospital, and to whom I had become, in the one short year in which we had practised together, most unreasonably attached.

I say unreasonably, because it was a liking for which I could not account even to myself, as he was neither especially prepossessing in appearance, nor gifted with any too great amiability of character. He was, however, a brilliant theorist, and an unquestionably reliable practitioner; and for those reasons, probably, I entertained for him a profound respect and, as I have already said, a hearty and spontaneous affection.

As our specialities were the same, and as, moreover, they were of a nature which did not call for night work, we usually spent the evening together. But once I failed to join him, and it is of this night I have to tell.

I had been to Ealing, for my heart was sore over the trouble I had had with Dora, and I was resolved to make one final effort towards reconciliation. But, alas for my hopes, she was not at home, and what was worse, I soon learned that she was going to sail the next morning for Madeira, where some relations of hers were staying.

This news, coming as it did without warning, affected me seriously, for I knew if she escaped from my influence at this time I should certainly lose her for ever, for the gentleman concerning whom we had quarrelled was a much better man for her than I, and almost equally in love. However, her father, who had always been my friend, did not look upon this same gentleman's advantages with as favourable an eye as she did, and when he heard I was in the house he came hurrying into my presence with excitement written in every line of his fine face.

"Ah, Dick, my boy," he exclaimed, joyfully, "how opportune this is. I was wishing you would come, for do you know Appleby has taken passage on board the same steamer as Dora, and if he and she go together they will certainly come to an understanding, and that will not be fair to you, or pleasing to me, and I do not care who knows it?"

I gave him one look, and sank quite overwhelmed into the seat nearest me. Appleby was the name of my rival, and I quite agreed with her father that the *tête-à-têtes* afforded by an ocean voyage would surely put an end to the hopes which I had so long and so secretly cherished.

"Does she know he is going? Did she encourage him?" I stammered.

But the old man answered generally:

"Oh, she knows, but I cannot say anything positive about her having encouraged him. The fact is, Dick, she still holds a soft place in her heart for you, and if you were going to be of the party——"

"Well?"

"I think you would come off conqueror yet."

"Then I will be of the party," I cried. "It is only six now and I can be back at my place at seven. That gives me five hours before midnight, time enough in which to arrange my plans, see Richter, and make everything ready for sailing in the morning."

It seemed wild, this scheme, but I determined to pursue it. I loved Dora too much to lose her, and if three weeks' absence would procure me the happiness of my life, why should I hesitate to avail myself of the proffered opportunity? I rode on air as the train I had taken shot from station to station, and by the time I had arrived at Paddington my plans were all laid and my time disposed of till midnight.

It was, therefore, with no laggard step that I hurried home, nor was it with any ordinary feelings of impatience that I found Richter out; for this was not his usual hour for absenting himself, and I had much to tell him and many instructions to give. It was my first check, and I was fuming over it, when I saw what looked like a package of books lying on the table before me, and though it was addressed to my partner I was about to take it up, when I heard my name uttered in a tremulous tone, and turning, saw a man standing in the doorway, who, the moment I met his eye, advanced into the room, and said:—

"Oh, doctor, I have been waiting for you an hour; Mrs. Warner has been taken very bad, sir, and she prays that you will not delay a moment before coming to her. It is something serious, I fear, and she may have died already, for she would have no one else but you, and it is now an hour since I left her."

"And who are you?" I asked; for though I knew Mrs. Warner well—she was my best patient—I did not know her messenger.

"I am a servant in the house where she was taken ill."

"Then she is not at home?"

"No, sir; she is in St. John's Road."

"I am very sorry," I began, "but I have not the time."

But he interrupted eagerly—

"There is a carriage at the door; we thought you might not have your's ready."

I had noticed the carriage.

"Very well," said I, "I will go; but first let me write a line."

"Oh, sir," the man broke in pleadingly, "do not wait for anything. She is really very bad, and I heard her calling for you as I ran out of the house."

"She had her voice, then," I ventured, somewhat distrustful of the whole thing, and yet not knowing how to refuse the man, especially as it was absolutely necessary to see Mrs. Warner that night and get her consent to my departure before I could think of making further plans.

So, leaving word for Richter to be sure and wait for me if he came home before I did, I signified to Mrs. Warner's messenger that I was ready to go with him, and immediately took a seat in the carriage which had been provided for me. The man at once jumped up on the box beside the driver, and before I could close the carriage door we were off.

As we went the thought came, "What if Mrs. Warner will not let me off?" But I dismissed the fear at once, for this patient of mine was an extremely unselfish woman, and if she were not too ill to grasp the situation would certainly sympathise with the strait I was in and consent to accept Richter's services in place of my own, especially as she knew and trusted him.

When the carriage stopped it was already dark, and I could distinguish little of the house I entered save that it was large and old, and did not look like an establishment where a man-servant would be likely to be kept.

"Is Mrs. Warner here?" I asked of the man, who was slowly getting down from the box.

"Yes, sir," he answered quickly, and I was about to ring the bell before me when the door opened and a young German girl, curtseying slightly, welcomed me in, saying:

"Mrs. Warner is upstairs, sir, in the front room, if you please."

Not doubting her, but greatly astonished at the barren aspect of the place I was in, I stumbled up the faintly-lighted stairs before me and entered the great front room. It was empty, but through an open door at the other end I heard a voice saying, "He has come, madam." And anxious to see my patient, whose presence in this desolate house I found it harder and harder to understand, I stepped into the room where she presumably lay.

Alas, for my temerity in doing so! for no sooner had I crossed the threshold than the door by which I had entered closed with a click unlike any I had ever heard before; and when I turned to see what it meant, another click came from the opposite side of the room, and I perceived, with a benumbed sense of wonder, that the one person whose somewhat shadowy figure I had encountered on entering had vanished from the place, and that I was shut up alone in a room without visible means of egress.

This was startling and hard to believe at first, but after I had tried the door by which I had entered, and found it securely locked, and then bounded to the other side of the room, and tried the opposite one with the same result, I could but acknowledge I was caught.

What did it mean? Caught! and I was in haste—mad haste! Filling the room with my cries, I shouted for help and a quick release, but my efforts were, naturally, fruitless, and after exhausting myself in vain I stood still and surveyed, with what equanimity was left me, the appearance of the dreary place in which I had thus suddenly become entrapped.

It was a small, square room, and I shall not soon forget with what a foreboding shudder I observed that its four blank walls were literally unbroken by a single window, for this told me I was not in communication with the street, and that it would be impossible for me to summon help from the outside world.

The single gas-jet yet burning in a fixture hanging from the ceiling was the only relief given to the eye in the blank expanse of white wall that surrounded me, while as to furniture the room could boast of nothing more than an old-fashioned black-walnut table and two chairs, the latter cushioned but stiff in the back and generally dilapidated in appearance.

The only sign of comfort about me was a tray that stood on the table, containing a couple of bottles of wine and two glasses. The bottles were full and the glasses clean, and, to add to this appearance of hospitality, a box of cigars rested invitingly near, which I could not fail to perceive, even at the first glance, was of the very best brand.

Astonished at these tokens of consideration for my welfare, and confounded by the prospect which they offered of a lengthy stay in this place, I gave another great shout, but to no better purpose than before. Not a voice answered, and not a stir was heard in the house.

But there came from without the sound of suddenly moving wheels, as if the carriage which I had left standing before the door had slowly rolled away. If this were so, then I was indeed a prisoner, while the moments so necessary to my plans, and perhaps to the securing of my whole future happiness were flying by like the wind.

As I realised this, and my own utter helplessness, I fell into one of the chairs before me in a state of perfect despair. Not that any fears for my life were disturbing me, though one in my situation might well question if he would ever again breathe the open air, from which he had been so ingeniously lured.

I did not in that first moment of utter downheartedness so much as enquire for the reason of the trick which had been played upon me. No, for my heart was full of Dora, and I was asking myself if I were destined to lose her after all, and that through no lack of effort on my part, but just because a party of thieves or blackmailers had thought fit to play a game with my liberty.

It could not be; there must be some mistake about it. It was some great joke, or I was the victim of a dream, or suffering from some hideous nightmare. Why, only half-an-hour before I was in my own house, among my own familiar belongings, and now—but, alas, it was no delusion. Only four blank, whitewashed walls met my enquiring eyes, and though I knocked and knocked again upon the two doors which guarded me on either side, hollow echoes continued to be the only answer I received.

Had the carriage, then, taken away the two persons I had seen in this house, and was I indeed alone in its great emptiness? The thought made me desperate, but notwithstanding this, I was resolved to continue my efforts, for I might be mistaken; there might yet be some being left who would yield to my entreaties if they were backed by something substantial.

Taking out my watch I laid it on the table; it was just 7.45. Then I emptied my trousers pockets of whatever money they held, and when all was heaped up before me I could count but £3, which, together with my studs and a seal ring which I wore, seemed a paltry pittance with which to barter for the liberty of which I had been robbed.

But it was all I had with me, and I was willing to part with it at once, if only some one would unlock the door and let me go. But how make known my wishes, even if there were any one to listen to them? I had already called in vain, and there was no bell.

Yes, there was; why had I not seen it before? There was a bell, and I sprang to ring it. But just as my hand fell on the cord I heard a gentle voice behind my back saying, in good English, but with a strong foreign accent:

"Put up your money, Mr. Atwater; we do not want your money, only your society. Allow me to beg you to replace both watch and money."

Wheeling about in my double surprise at the presence of this intruder, and his unexpected acquaintance with my name, I encountered the smiling glance of a middle-aged man of gentlemanly appearance and courteous manners. He was bowing almost to the ground, and was, as I instantly detected, of German birth and education, a gentleman, and not the blackleg I had every reason to expect to see.

"You have made a slight mistake," he was saying; "it is your society, only your society that we want."

Astonished at his appearance, and exceedingly irritated at his words, I stepped back as he offered me my watch and bluntly cried,—

"If it is my society only that you want, you have certainly taken very strange means to procure it. A thief could have set no neater trap, and if it is money you want, state your sum and let me go, for my time is valuable, and my society likely to be unpleasant."

He gave a shrug with his shoulders that in no wise interfered with his set smile.

"You choose to be facetious," he observed. "I have already remarked that we have no use for your money. Will you sit down? Here is some excellent wine, and if this brand of cigars does not suit you I will send for another."

"Send for the hangman," I cried, greatly exasperated. "What do you mean by keeping me in this place against my will? Open that door and let me out, or ——"

I was ready to spring, and he saw it. Smiling more atrociously than ever, he slipped behind the table, and before I could reach him had quietly drawn a revolver, which he cocked before my eyes.

"You are excited," he remarked, with a suavity that nearly drove me mad. "Now, excitement is no aid to good company, and I am determined that none but good company shall be in this room to-night. So, if you will be kind enough to calm yourself, Mr. Atwater, you and I may yet enjoy ourselves, but if not—— "

The action he made was significant, and I felt the cold sweat break out on my forehead through all the heat of my indignation. But I did not mean to show him that he had intimidated me.

"Excuse me," said I, "and put down your revolver. Though you are making me lose irredeemable time, I will try to control myself enough to give you an opportunity for explaining yourself. Why have you entrapped me into this place?"

"I have already told you," said he, gently laying the weapon before him, but in easy reach of his hand.

"But that is preposterous," I began, fast losing my self-control again. "You do not know me, and if you did?"

"Pardon me, you see I know your name."

Yes, that was true, and the fact set me thinking. How did he know my name? I did not know him, nor did I know this house or any reason for which I could have been beguiled into it. Was I the victim of a conspiracy, or was the man mad? Looking at him very earnestly I said:—

"My name is Atwater, and so far you are right; but in learning that much about me you must have also learned that I am neither rich nor influential or of any special value to a blackmailer. Why choose me out, then, for your society? Why not choose some one who can talk?"

"I find your conversation very interesting."

Baffled, exasperated almost beyond my power to restrain myself, I shook my fist in his face, notwithstanding I saw his hand fly to his revolver.

"Let me go," I shrieked. "Let me go out of this place. I have business, I tell you—important business which means everything to me, and which if I do not attend to to-night will be lost to me for ever. Let me go and I will so far reward you that I will speak to no one of what has taken place here to-night, but go my way, forgetful of you, forgetful of this house, forgetful of all connected with it."

"You are very good," was his quiet reply, "but this wine has to be drunk." And he calmly poured out a glass while I drew back in despair. "You do not drink wine?" he queried, holding up the glass he had filled between himself and the light. "It is a pity, for it is of most rare vintage. But perhaps you smoke?"

Sick and disgusted, I found a chair and sat down in it. If the man were crazy there was certainly method in his madness. Besides he had not a crazy eye; there was calm calculation in it and not a little good nature. Did he simply want to detain me, and if so did he have a motive it would pay me to fathom before I exerted myself further to insure my release? Answering the wave he made me with his hand, by reaching out for the bottle and filling myself a glass, I forced myself to speak more affably as I remarked:

"If the wine must be drunk, we had better set about it, as you cannot mean to detain me more than an hour, whatever reason you may have for wishing my society."

He looked at me inquiringly before answering, then tossing off his glass, he remarked:

"I am sorry, but in an hour a man can scarcely make the acquaintance of another man."

"Then you mean——"

"To know you thoroughly if you will be so good; I may never have the opportunity again."

He must be mad—nothing else but mania could account for such words and such actions and yet, if mad, why was he allowed to enter my presence? The man who brought me here, the woman who received me at the door, had not been mad.

"And I must stay here," I began.

"Until I am quite satisfied. I am afraid that will take until morning."

I gave a cry of despair, and then, in my utter desperation, spoke up to him as I would to a man of feeling.

"You don't mean what you are doing; you don't know what I shall suffer by any such cruel detention. This night is not like other nights to me. This is a special night in my life, and I need it—I need it, I tell you—to spend as I will.

"The woman I love"—it seemed horrible to speak of her in this place, but I was wild at my helplessness, and madly hoped that I might awake some answering chord in a breast which could not be void of all feeling, or he would not have that benevolent look in his eye "the woman I love," I repeated, "sails for Madeira to-morrow. We have quarrelled, but she still cares for me, and if I can sail on the same steamer we will yet make up and be happy."

"At what time does this steamer start?"

"At nine in the morning."

"Well, you shall leave this house at eight. If you go directly to the steamer, you will be in time."

"But—but," I panted, "I have made no arrangements. I shall have to go to my lodgings, write letters, get money—I ought to be there at this moment. Have you no mercy on a man who never did you wrong, and only asks to quit you and forget the precious hours you made him lose?"

"I am sorry," he said. "It is certainly quite unfortunate, but the door will not be opened before eight. There is really no one in the house to unlock it."

"And do you mean to say," I cried, aghast, "that you could not open that door if you would, that you are locked here as well as I, and that I must remain here till morning, no matter how I feel or you feel?"

"Will you not take a cigar?" he asked.

Then I began to see how useless it was to struggle, and visions of Dora leaning on the steamer rail with that serpent whispering soft entreaties in her ear came rushing before me till I could have wept in my jealous chagrin.

"It is cruel, base, vile," I began. "If you had the excuse of wanting money and took the opportunity of wringing my all from me, I could have patience, but to entrap and keep me here for nothing, when my whole future happiness is trembling in the balance, is the work of a fiend, and——" I made a sudden pause, for a strange idea had struck me

What if these men and this woman were in league with him whose rivalry I feared and whom I intended to supplant on the morrow. It was a wild surmise, but was it any wilder than to believe I was held here for a mere whim, a freak, a joke, as this bowing, smiling man before me would have me believe?

Rising in fresh excitement, I struck my hand on the table.

"You want to keep me from going on the steamer?" I cried. "That other wretch who loves her has paid you."

But that other wretch could not know that I was meditating any such unusual scheme as following him without a full day's warning. I thought of this even before I had finished my sentence, and did not heed the blank astonishment in the face of the man before me to convince me that I had given utterance to a foolish accusation. "It would have been some sort of motive for your actions," I humbly added as I sank back from my hostile attitude. "Now you have none."

I thought he bestowed upon me a look of quiet pity, but if so he soon hid it with his uplifted glass.

"Forget the girl," said he. "I know of a dozen just as pretty."

I was too indignant to answer.

"Women are the bane of life," he now sententiously exclaimed. "They are ever intruding themselves between a man and his happiness, as for instance just now between yourself and this good wine."

I caught up the bottle in sheer desperation.

"Don't talk of them," I cried, "and I will try and drink. I almost wish there was poison in the glass. My death here might bring punishment upon you."

He shook his head, totally unmoved by my passion.

"We deal punishment, not receive it. It would not worry me in the least to leave you lying here upon the floor."

I did not believe that, but I did not stop to weigh the question then. I was too much struck by a word he had used.

"Deal punishment?" I repeated. "Are you punishing me? Is that why I am here?"

He laughed, and held out his glass to mine.

"You enjoy being sarcastic," he observed. "Well, it gives a spice to conversation, I own. Talk is apt to be dull without it."

For reply I struck the glass out of his hand. It fell and shivered, and he looked for the moment really distressed.

"I would rather you had struck me," he remarked, "for I have an answer for an injury like that, but for a broken glass——" He sighed and looked dolefully at the pieces on the floor.

Mortified and somewhat ashamed, I put down my own glass.

"You should not have exasperated me," I cried, and walked away beyond temptation to the other side of the room.

His spirits had received a damper, but in a few minutes he seized a cigar and began smoking. As the wreaths curled over his head he began to talk, and this time it was on subjects totally foreign to myself and even to himself.

It was good talk that I recognised, though I hardly listened to what he said. I was asking myself what time it had now got to be, and what was the meaning of my incarceration, till my brain became weary and I could scarcely distinguish the topic he discussed.

But he kept on for all my seeming and, indeed, real indifference—kept on hour after hour in a monologue he endeavoured to make interesting and which probably would have been so if the time and occasion had been fit for my enjoying it.

As it was I had no ear for his choicest phrases, his subtlest criticisms, or his most philosophic disquisitions; I was wrapped up in self, and my cruel disappointment, and when in a sudden excess of frenzy, I leaped to my feet, and took a look at the watch still lying on the table and saw it was four o'clock in the morning, I gave a groan of final despair and, throwing myself on the floor, gave myself up to the heavy sleep that mercifully came to relieve me.

I was roused by feeling a touch on my breast. Clapping my hand to the spot where I had felt the intruding hand, I discovered that my watch had been returned to my pocket. Drawing it out I first looked at it and then cast my eyes quickly about the room. There was no one with me, and the doors stood open between me and the hall. It was eight o'clock, as my watch had just told me.

That I rushed from the house and took the shortest road to the steamer goes without saying. I could not cross the ocean with Dora, but I might yet see her and tell her how near I came to giving her my company on that long voyage, which now would only serve to further the ends of my rival.

But when, after torturing delays, and incredible efforts to pierce a throng that was equally determined not to be pierced, I at last reached the wharf, it was to behold her, just as I had fancied in my wildest moments, leaning on the rail of the ship and listening, while she abstractedly waved her hand to some friends below, to the words of the man who had never looked so handsome to me or so odious as at this moment of his unconscious triumph.

Her father was near her, and from his eager attitude and rapidly wandering gaze I saw that he was looking for me. At last he spied me struggling aboard and immediately his face lighted up in a way which made me wish he had not thought it necessary to wait for my anticipated meeting with his daughter.

"Ah, Dick, you are late," he began effusively as I put foot on deck.

But I waved him back and went at once to Dora.

"Forgive me, pardon me," I incoherently said, as her sweet eyes rose in startled pleasure to mine.

"I would have brought you flowers, but I meant to sail with you, Dora; I tried to, but wretches, villains prevented it, and—and—"

"O, it does not matter," she said, and then blushed, probably because the words sounded unkind. "I mean"

But she could not say what she meant, for just then the bell rang for all visitors to leave the ship, and her father came forward, and, evidently thinking all was right between us, smiled benignantly in her face, gave her a kiss and me a wink, and disappeared in the crowd that was now going rapidly ashore.

I felt that I must follow, but I gave her one look, and one squeeze of the hand, and then, as I saw her glances wander to his face, I groaned in spirit, stammered some words of choking sorrow, and was gone before her embarrassment would let her speak words which I knew would only add to my grief, and make this hasty parting unendurable.

The look of amazement and chagrin with which her father met my reappearance on the dock can easily be imagined.

"Why, Dick," he exclaimed, "aren't you going after all? I thought I could rely on you. Where's your pluck, lad? Scared off by a frown? I wouldn't have believed it, Dick. What if she does frown to-day; she will smile to-morrow."

I shook my head, but could not tell him just then that it was not through any lack of pluck on my part that I had failed him.

When I left the dock I went straight to a restaurant, for I was faint as well as miserable, not having had any supper the night before or any breakfast this morning. But my cup of coffee choked me, and the roll and eggs were more than I could face.

Rising impatiently, I went out. Was any one more wretched than I was that morning, and could anyone nourish a more bitter grievance? As I strode towards my lodgings I chewed the cud of my disappointments till my wrongs loomed up like mountains and I was seized with a spirit of revenge.

Should I let such an interference as I had received go unpunished? No; if the wretch who had detained me was not used to punishment he should receive a specimen of it now, and from a man who was no longer a prisoner, and who once aroused did not easily forego his purposes. Turning aside from my former destination I went immediately to a police station, and when I had entered my complaint was astonished to see that all the officials had grouped about me and were listening to my words with the most startled interest.

"Was the man who came for you a German?" one asked I said "Yes."

"And the man who stood guardian over you and entertained you with wine and cigars, was not he a German, too?"

I nodded acquiescence and they at once began to whisper together; then one of them advanced to me and said:

"You have not been home, I understand; you had better come."

Astonished by his manner, I endeavoured to inquire what he meant, but he drew me away, and not till we were within a stone's throw of my house did he say:

"You must prepare yourself for a shock. The impertinences you suffered from last night were unpleasant, no doubt, but if you had been allowed to return home you might not now be deploring them in comparative peace and safety."

"What do you mean?"

"That your partner was not as fortunate as yourself. Look up at the house; what do you see there?"

A crowd, that is what I saw first; but he made me look higher, and then I perceived that the windows of my room, of our room, were shattered and blackened, and that part of the casement of one had been blown out.

"A fire!" I shrieked. "Poor Richter was smoking——"

"No, he was not smoking. He had no time for a smoke. An infernal machine burst in that room last night and your friend was its wretched victim."

I never knew why my friend's life was made a sacrifice to the revenge of his fellow-countrymen. Though we had been intimate in the year we had been together, he had never talked to me of his country, and I had never seen him in company with one of his own nation.

But that he was a victim of some political revenge was apparent, for though it proved impossible to find the man who had detained me, the house was found and ransacked, and among other secret things was discovered the model of the machine which had been introduced into our room, and which had proved so fatal to the man it was addressed to.

Why men who were so relentless in their purposes towards him should have taken such pains to keep me from sharing his fate is one of those anomalies in human nature which now and then awake our astonishment. If I had not lost Dora through my detention at their hands, I should look back upon that evening with sensations of thankfulness, as it is, I sometimes question if it would not have been better if they had let me take the chances.

Have I lost Dora? From a letter I received to-day I begin to think not.

A WARNING.

The
ranks of
life's battle are
open to all, The lowly
as well as the great, And
though in the conflict fall
many must fall, You may reach
to an honoured estate. Press up to
the front, with a resolute mind,
And struggle with all of your
might, Or soon to your
shame and confusion
you'll find You
are but the
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THE LAST CHAMPION OF GRANADA.

NOVEMBER 25TH, 1491.

I.

Round the long-beleaguered city,
'Mid the Vega's wasted fields,
Closer draw the Christian legions,
Waiting till Granada yields;
Till Granada the Pomegranate,
Fairest fruit of Spanish skies,
Parched and sere with drought and famine
Shall become the victor's prize.

In the throne-room of Alhambra
Sat the chiefs in sad debate
On the summons to surrender
To the foeman at the gate;
And Abdallah the Unlucky,
Traitor, perjurer, and slave,
Urged the ruin of the kingdom
That his faint-heart dare not save.

Said the Vizier, with his master
Seeking but to yield and live,—
"Lo! two hundred thousand hunger
For the bread we cannot give.
Knights on foot, their horses eaten,
With the footmen faint for food,
And our strongest men are sinking
With their wounds and loss of blood.
Nor from Africa nor Egypt
Come the Moslems to our aid,
And full fifty thousand Christians
Hold us here in strait blockade.
It is vain to struggle longer,
Let great Allah's will be done!
Sign the terms, my Lord Abdallah,
Sign! Thy kingdom's race is run!
Lo, the terms are very easy,
And the Christian Queen is good;
She hath pity on our children
And would spare their fathers' blood.
Better thus than that Fernando
With his serried ranks of steel
Should o'erwhelm our fair Granada—
He who cannot stand must kneel!"

Thus he said—and for a moment
Silence reigned throughout the hall;
Then rose Musa Abel Gazan,
Only hero of them all.
On his right hand men were weeping,
On his left Abdallah wept;
Only he, dry-eyed and steadfast,
Still his manhood stainless kept.
Once his proud lips curled in anger,
Once his eyes flashed fiery scorn,
Then his wrath rolled forth in thunder
On Alhambra's echoes borne:

"Chiefs of Islam! leave this weeping
To your women and your slaves,
Shall true Moslems yield while o'er them
Still the Prophet's banner waves?
We are men, and manhood bids us
Hold in scorn such paltry fears,
Bids us rather shed our heart's-blood
Than these craven, woman's tears.
What though there be no salvation
For the city of our pride—
Yet our sons may tell their children
How Granada's champions died!
What though triumph be not for us,
What though valour cannot save,
Hath despair no nobler guerdon
Than the shackles of the slave?
Will our mother-earth deny us
The red refuge of the grave?
Nay—should e'en a grave be wanting
When on yonder plain we lie,
Will not still outspread above us
Andalusia's azure sky?—
Shall men say Granada's champions
For Granada feared to die?"

Thus he spoke—and still the viziers
Sat in silence round the board
Where Fernando's blazoned parchment
Lay spread out before their lord.
Anxiously did King Abdallah
Scan each chieftain's gloomy face,
And in each one's wordless sorrow
Read the sentence of his race.

"Allah akbar!" then exclaimed he,
"God is God, and other more!
Well men name me the Unlucky,
Let the will of God be done!"
"God is great!" the chieftains echoed,
"Let the will of God be done!"
So they took the fatal Parchment,
Once more scanned it, line by line,
And Abdallah took the reed-pen
In his trembling hand to sign,

Then once more arose brave Musa,
And his voice again out-rang
As from fortress-tower at midnight
Peals the loud-voiced tocsin's clang:—

"O my brothers! yet a moment
Hear an old man's warning word
Ere ye sign yon cursèd Parchment,
Ere ye break Granada's sword!
Lo! these words are fair and kindly,
And they promise much, I trow,
But when did Spain's false chivalry
Keep with Moslems pledge or vow?

Think ye that these perjured Christians
Will perform the thing they say?
Ay—when flowers shall bloom in winter,
And the moon shall rule the day!
Think ye that this dog Fernando,
He who dare not face our swords,
Will in victory do justice
To Granada's fallen lords?

Thirty years in youth and manhood
I have fought against the Cross,
Seen its shadows still outspreading,
Mourned for Islam's every loss—
But ne'er yet in peace or warfare,
From my maiden fight till now,
Have I known the Christian faithful
To his honour and his vow,
Know ye not, O True Believers,
That these Christians' lying priests
Teach them to esteem the Faithful
Lower than the soulless beasts?
That they hold no promise binding
When 'tis made outside their creed,
That their oaths are but pretences
To deceive us in our need?
Yes, I tell thee, Lord Abdallah,
That no words, however fair,
Can bind Christian unto Moslem,
More than bonds of woven air!
Yonder Parchment is the warrant
Of quick death to thee and thine;
Ruin to thy faith and nation,
And the old Granadan line!

—What! all silent! God most gracious!
Can these be Thy champions now?
Surrender, then, ye recreants!
Yet list to a Moslem's vow—
Though thrice ten thousand Christians
Shall seek my course to stay,
For sake of all I cannot save,
To honour's grave this stainless glaive
Shall hew my bloody way!
One heart still true to Islam
In Musa's breast doth beat,
One Moslem still unconquered,
A soldier's fate shall meet!
Sign the terms, my Lord Abdallah!
Sign ye, too, Granada's lords!
And, since the Christian bids you,
Sheath your dishonoured swords!
For me—in this last hour of doom
From out the portals of the tomb
I bid ye all farewell!
My path shall end in Paradise,
As yours shall end in Hell!
Alone I go to battle
For fair Granada's fame;
By Allah and his Prophet
I *will not* see her shame!"

* * * * * *

Along the banks of Xenil,
Scarcely a league away,
A good half-score of knights or more
Bring tidings home of finished war
And plunder of foray.
To gain the Camp by sundown
Each man of them doth pray,
For there bright eyes will bless emprise
With glances soft as summer skies;
And feast and joust and minstrel song
Await the gallant and the strong,
Yonder in Santa Fé.

But few of all that joyous band
To-night in camp will rest,
And few shall clasp fair lady's hand,
And few before Fernando stand
To do their King's behest;
For though the Peace to-day was signed,
And though the war is done,
One Moslem still of steadfast mind
Hath sworn a hero's grave to find
Ere shines to-morrow's sun.

"What ho, Sir Knight! God save you!
Come you from Santa Fé,
Or from Granada's fastness
Where men to Mahound pray?
Stand! in the Christian Sovereigns' name!
Ere worse on thee be done;
God wot, it were not to our fame
To take thee ten to one!"

No word the Stranger answers,
But lays his lance in rest
And, bending low, like shaft from bow
Flies furious at the foremost foe
With such grim, deadly zest,
That horse and knight in piteous plight
Roll headlong in the dust;
Nor groan is heard nor limb is stirred
After that fatal thrust.

And now the Silent Horseman
Rides round in circuit wide.
And hard the knights ride after,
And fast each spur is plied.
But none can overtake him
Till the hawk swoops again
And another foe lies bleeding
And lifeless on the plain.
Once more he wheels and charges,
And yet another foe,
With shattered shield and breastplate,
In bloody dust lies low.
And now the seven Christians
Surround the single Moor,
And fierce the battle rages,
And fast the blood doth pour,
Till, breaking through the circle,
He gains the open plain,
A furlong's space prolongs the race,
Then charges in again.
But now in serried phalanx
The seven Spaniards close,
And, to the single Moorish lance,
Seven Christian spears oppose.
God help thee now, brave Moslem!
Surely thine hour is nigh!
Yet never knight in fiercer fight
Showed foeman how to die!
Like levin-bolt he dashes
Full on the levelled spears,
Two from his good shield glance aside,
Three from his charger's harness glide,
One snaps off short, and one strikes wide,
And so the press he clears!

Two foes have fallen, and the five
Charge on the Moor again,
But ere their lances reach him
Their chivalry draws rein
As they see his wounded charger
Sink lifeless to the plain.

"Now yield thee to our mercy
Thou bravest of thy race!
On such a field thou well may'st yield
Nor hold it for disgrace!"

The Moslem grasps his weapons,
Sword, mace in either hand,
And strides towards the river,
And gains the flowery strand;
Then, grasping sword and dagger,
Still silent, waits the foe,
A mounted knight to left and right,
The foaming flood below.
Three spears' length off the Spaniards
All wondering draw rein,
And once more to surrender
They summon him again,
But never word in answer
The silent Moslem saith,
For his is that high valour
Which only yields to death.

Each knight looks at his fellows,
Then at the dauntless Moor,
Calmly defiant standing there
In the grim grandeur of despair
Alone and wounded sore!

Now all dismount, and round him
Five naked falchions gleam,—
One glance he casts to heaven,
And one upon the stream,
Then, like a tiger springing
Upon the nearest foe,
Through helm and skull his scymetar
Cleaves in one deadly blow.
Then on another leaping
He drags him to the ground,
And instant, through the gorget-joint,
His good Damascus dagger's point
A Christian heart has found!
Now from the wound he wrenches
The broken, dripping blade,
And, fainting 'neath the raining blows
He faces his remaining foes
Dying yet undismayed;
Now backward staggering to the shore
He gains the slippery brink once more
Blinded with sweat and blood;
With one last effort hurls his mace
Full in the foremost foeman's face—
Then plunges in the flood!

So died Granada's champion,
So fell her bravest knight,
And never more was Musa
Beheld by mortal sight.

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Edited by C. Arthur Pearson (of Pearson's Weekly)
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Lansdown Road, Lee, Kent, Jan. 2nd, 1891.
Lady Willis writes: "I am so pleased with the 'Eclipse' Carpets and Rugs sent that I should like two more 'Eclipse' Carpets and two Rugs to be forwarded at once. Enclose 10s. 6d. enclosed."

The Vicarage, St. John's in Weardale, Jan. 25th, 1892.
The Rev. R. Shepherd writes: "The 'Eclipse' Carpets have arrived, and as they are so cheap and satisfactory I thank you to send two more of the 'Eclipse' Carpets and Rugs. I enclose cheque 10s. 6d. in payment."

Crane Hill, Ipswich, Jan. 19th, 1892.
The Rev. R. Perry writes: "I shall be much obliged if you will send two 'Eclipse' Carpets and Rugs. I enclose 10s. 6d. The Carpet you sent me some months ago wears very well."

Portman Square, London, Nov. 23rd, 1891.
Lady Julian Walker writes: "I am much pleased with the 'Eclipse' Carpets and Rugs sent last week. Would Mr. Hodgson send twelve more of them. Cheque enclosed."

Moreton Cottage, Bournemouth, Jan. 27th, 1892.
G. Ballam, Esq., writes: "Kindly send on two more 'Eclipse' Carpets with Rugs in different patterns. The last we had from you has worn well, and given satisfaction."

27, Woodhurst Road, Acton, Feb. 11th, 1892.
Hyde Martin, Esq., writes: "I am much pleased with the 'Eclipse' Carpet and Rug received last month, and now enclose P.O. for 20s., and would be obliged if Mr. Hodgson would forward four more of them, carriage paid."

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NED.

"And so, dear, you have decided to name the baby Ned! Was Fred quite willing?"

"It was his own suggestion. Please like it, Elizabeth?"

"I do like it, little one; I love it; and I love Fred for suggesting it."

As I stood looking at the pretty maternal picture of my sister Barbara adoring her first-born, my heart was full of thankfulness and my eyes wet with tears. "Ah, my little man," I said, stooping to kiss the tiny scrap of humanity, "if you are brought up as I think you will be, you will be more proud of your first name than of your last. How you came by it is almost like a story."

And then I suddenly thought that perhaps it was a story, so here it is.

"Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them," saith the Psalmist, and I think that even had my father been less happy in his family relations, he would have striven to feel "blessed," in order to fulfil the Scriptures. For there were twelve of us, all high-spirited and running over with mischief. I, Elizabeth, was the eldest daughter, and Barbara, who was ten years younger, the most beautiful and the favourite.

Why none of us were jealous of Barbara, I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was because we all united in spoiling her. She was the only delicate baby my mother ever had, and this naturally caused a difference in the beginning. But had it not been this, some other reason would have presented itself. That old woman was a deep philosopher who said of her unmarried sisters:

"It ain't never that there be no men about—it's the winnin' ways as is wantin' in the gals."

Winning ways were not lacking in Barbara's case, and as child and woman she was most perfectly beautiful in face and form. Some few, who had not fallen under the witchery of her personality, maintained that she was too small, too fairy-like—that the soft golden hair was too fluffy and luxuriant.

Small Barbara might be, but the erect little body was a storage-house for spirit and fire sufficient for a dozen ordinary mortals. Her pretty, imperious ways gained for her the title of "Princess" with father and the boys. My mother disliked the name, thinking it not good for Barbara, and we girls never used it for quite another reason. It was our small and only stand against the absolute monarchy.

But when she was about four years old another subject was added to Barbara's list—one who was to outstrip all others in loyal devotion, and this was Ned—black, savage, untameable Ned.

His mother was a full-blooded African who had been purchased by our uncle, the owner of a large plantation in Virginia. He bought her with her baby in her arms, out of pure compassion, he said; for she was as untamed as a savage and evidently untameable—utterly useless to her Florida master, who was trying to subdue her by methods of which we were spared the recital. But the change of masters came to her too late. Though her spirit was unbroken, it was so bruised and festering as to render her death no surprise when it occurred some months later.

The child, whose name was Ned, was brought up in the quarters with the other negro children. He developed early a wild and lawless spirit, and when he was put into the field to work the overseer complained constantly that he was a leader among the slaves and thoroughly insubordinate. My uncle's attention thus called in his direction, he found Ned a man of twenty-two years, superbly built, and apparently as much of a savage as his mother.

Remembering her history, my uncle determined to make no attempt to break the lad's spirit. He wrote at once to my mother, telling her the whole story and saying that, as he found Ned responded to kindness, he felt sure there was the making of a magnificent servant in him. He ended by begging my mother to accept him and give him the individual attention that his bachelor home could not afford, adding that if the boy proved too much for her he could be returned.

Mother and father talked the matter over, and the end of it was Ned came. He was almost a giant quite six feet four, but too perfectly proportioned to show his full height, and lithe and active as a panther.

Mother decided to train him as a waiter. He learned rapidly, and though at first he lifted barrels of flour with ease and trembled under a glass of water, he soon waited with a really stately elegance. The strangeness of the new home and surroundings kept the old lawless spirit in check; but familiarity bred the usual contempt, and in a few weeks Ned was king of the kitchen as absolutely as he had been king of the Virginian plantation.

Possibly this spirit was an inheritance; undoubtedly his appearance bore out the supposition, and perhaps from the same source sprang the wild gusts of rage which seemed to possess him and sweep him along resistlessly. Mother remonstrated gently, then sternly and repeatedly—all in vain.

Pandemonium seemed to have broken loose in the regions below stairs. Early one morning the climax came. An uproar such as never was heard before rose from the kitchen, causing my father's hasty appearance there for the first time in many years. Huddled in one corner were the frightened negroes, and in the centre of the room towered Ned, holding the group in subjection. Some trifle had irritated him, and this was the consequence.

Father was beyond measure angry so angry that Ned's rage paled before his. He told the rather sobered negro that he would stand it no more. Kindness had failed with him, and he should now have the whipping he richly deserved.

"Not to be given by me, however," he added. "The constable shall do it, and I mean to send for him to take you away at once."

So saying, my father left the house in a white heat. But he was unused to interfering in what he considered his wife's department, and was also a man of quick wrath and quicker forgetfulness; so, becoming absorbed in important matters of business, he spent no further thought on Ned or his misconduct.

It was not thus at home. So severe a measure had never before been resorted to, and we were all unhappy. Mother alone, and probably because she knew what manner of man our father was, remained as placid as ever as she sat in the nursery sewing.

But her placidity was to be rudely interrupted. There was a sudden patter of feet in the hall, a scrambling up the stairway, and Aunt Tilly, the black cook and whilom ruler of the kitchen, rushed into the room.

"Dat nigger gwine to kill somebody yit!" she wailed. "He done shet hisse'f up in de garret wid de meat-axe and ole marse's razor, an' he got all de knives what he wor a-cleanin', an' he say dar sha'n' be no po' white trash sont fer to whip him; dat he gwine ter kill de fust pusson dat set foot over de do' sill."

Two bright, hard spots of colour rose in my mother's cheeks as she listened, but her manner was unhurried as she quilted her needle into her work and shook off the threads from her dress into the open fireplace. With her usual even pace she walked out of the room and up the stairway, we children, with the servants who had gathered in the hall, stringing after her. On she went to the partially-closed garret door. There she paused.

"Ned!"

There was no answer.

Raising her hand, my mother struck the door lightly with her palm, throwing it wide open and disclosing Ned, who stood before it. All the savage was up and looking out of the dark, scowling face, the bloodshot eyes, the drawn lips. His body was thrown back, and in one hand, raised above his head, he held the axe. In the other flashed the razor.

The servants crowded behind each other with smothered cries, but mother, with her beautiful, proud head thrown back, stepped over the threshold. She was slightly and delicately made, yet as she stood opposite the huge negro, her figure drawn up to its full height, her cheeks brilliant, her eyes flashing defiance into his, she rose above the question of brawn and muscle, to become his full equal in power, but no more.

The inflexible blue eyes and the passionate black ones looked unflinchingly into each other for what seemed to me an age. And then suddenly my mother's whole figure seemed to relax. The scornful, curling lips half smiled. The blue eyes looked infinitely soft and pitying. She stepped swiftly to Ned's side and laid her gentle hand on his shoulder, "You poor boy," she said softly, "why will you do so?"

Wonder drove passion from the dark face—wonder held Ned spell-bound as my mother took the weapons from his unresisting hands. But when she bade him return to his work he seemed to awake, and darting a furious glance around, he rushed headlong from the room and down the stairs. But then something happened which I cannot think of even now without a darting sense of horror. Half way up the stairs stood little Barbara. Her nurse had deserted her and she was following after.

Spreading out her tiny arms, she blocked Ned's way.

"You is dot to tarry me down 'tairs," she cried in her sweet treble. "I hurted my foot and I aren't a-doin' to walk."

Ned stopped and hesitated. I sprang forward, but mother, her face as pale as her handkerchief, held my arm in an iron grasp. I turned sick and faint; everything swam before my eyes, and when I could see again it was a strange sight that awaited me. Barbara was sitting high in Ned's arms, singing a little tune to herself and beating time on his woolly head.

He carried her down the stairs, straight to the wood-room, where they spent the rest of the morning. One minute Ned was sawing wood furiously, and the next he was sitting with Barbara on his knee, delighting her heart by strange stories and games. Mother made me peep in occasionally, but would not allow them to be disturbed.

"The child is doing him good," she said.

At last the nursery door opened softly, and Ned entered with Barbara cradled in his arm sound asleep.

He laid her in the crib, covering her carefully, tenderly, soothing her when she half woke, and then left the room with noiseless step.

The battle was over. Ned had found his master, and that master was a baby.

There was never any real trouble with Ned after this. He now had a motive for good behaviour, and lived in deadly fear of being sent back to Virginia, away from "de fiddle-string of his heart, Miss Princess."

When he felt his old rages coming on he used simply to depart—where, we never knew. Sometimes he was gone for one day, sometimes for two. My mother wisely forebore asking questions, and when we children did so he would invariably reply gravely: "I was sent for suddint to go to the Islant of Dardanelles fer to wait on my Lord Concarson."

Barbara never had one atom of curiosity, so she never inquired unless we put her up to it, but even then we got no satisfaction. Ned would pick her up and carry her off, saying:

"Yes, honey, Ned's gwine to tell Miss Princess all 'bout it—jes' you come wid me."

But on her return we could never gather that she knew any more than we did. Barbara was so easily distracted and so lacking in any desire for knowledge.

In one respect Ned was very considerate. He never disappeared if guests were expected, and on one occasion he even returned hastily on remembering a dinner party! "Jes s'pose I ead 'a' gone on disrememberin' dis here party," I heard him say to Aunt Tilly. "Dere ain't one o' you niggers as knows even to set de table, an' when it comes to waitin'—Lord! I jes' run back like a har' soon as I come to think bout it. I ain't stop to take breff."

But these departures became less and less frequent as his adoration of Barbara grew stronger.

It was a strange sight to see the two together. Barbara's manner was as if graciously permitting affection, while Ned's was that of actual worship. Her first remark on seeing him was always, "I wants to be tarried," and Ned knew no higher happiness than holding her curled up in his great arms.

I think she enjoyed the sense of his powerful strength. A great deal of his work was done thus encumbered, but as Ned could set a table better with one hand than any one else with two, he was allowed to do as he chose.

He was Barbara's willing slave, a slave whom no Emancipation Act could liberate, though Ned himself was a great abolitionist and fond of making speeches upon the subject in the kitchen. My father had some misgivings about slaveholding also, and I think Ned divined the truth when he said:

"Ole mass', he done give Aunt Tilly her freedom fer a Christmas gif'. I guess his conscience been a-bearing down on him."

But however undecided were my father's politics, Ned's opinions were very definitely settled: and yet one small incident that occurred in the first year of our Civil War was to make him bitterly opposed to all that he had previously held dear.

When the war broke out Barbara was eight years old and was going to school with me. I was to leave at the end of the year. Our city was on the border-line and constantly full of soldiers; so my mother preferred to send Ned to and from school with us. But one day we were dismissed a few minutes earlier than usual, and I started home alone with my little sister.

When only a square from our door we met a Union soldier walking towards us. He looked admiringly at Barbara, and then stopped.

"Will you give me a kiss, my pretty bird?" he said.

She shrank to my side, speechless with terror. I do not believe the man meant to frighten her. He was a mild-looking little fellow, and probably had children of his own at home, but he stooped and lifted Barbara high in the air to steal the wished-for kiss. But that kiss he never got; for she was suddenly seized and whisked out of his hands and over his head, to his infinite astonishment. Ned was on the way to meet us and had flown to the rescue.

It was well for the little soldier, and perhaps well for Ned also, that Barbara required all of her faithful servant's soothing and attention. But from that moment Ned's horror of "dem Yanks" knew no bounds, and hatred of them included a hatred of their principles. His speeches in the kitchen veered in doctrine with an alarming suddenness.

He had things his own way, as usual, for the men were afraid of him and the maids admired him. Aunt Tilly alone spoke her mind, and I heard her do it from my upstairs window.

"You was a-talkin' de oder side of yer mouf," she said, as she hopped up and down in her vain endeavour to throw a dripping sheet over the high clothes-line in the yard. "You was a-sayin' dere warn't no right in a-holdin' de slaves."

Ned took the sheet from her with a contemptuous kindness and slung it over the line.

"Dat was before I knowed," he answered coolly and then, emphasizing his remark by driving down the clothes-pins, he added impressively, "Dat's what niggers was made fer."

The year 1865 was soon to prove that Ned and many others were mistaken. But we children cared little for this or anything else that did not directly concern us, and so the years of childhood slipped away with only enough shadow about them to throw out the sunlight more strongly; and when Barbara's seventeeth birthday came, it was to find us children yet in many ways. Barbara was still the "Princess," but Ned was, if possible, more than ever her captive. The great change was that Barbara was engaged to be married—and engaged to a Northerner who had lately settled among us—a Mr. Fred Damer, soon known to all of us as Fred; for formality was not possible with one of his sunny nature and kind heart.

Except for her extreme youth, I think we all were satisfied with Barbara's engagement, Ned alone excepted. That Barbara should marry anybody was bad enough, but that she should marry one of "dem Yanks" was intolerable.

He waited on Fred at table with undisguised disgust, muttering and shaking his head behind his back at every opportunity; invariably beginning to wait on him from the right side, and just as Fred adjusted himself to the awkwardness, rushing round to the left. It really amounted to a petty persecution, which kept the children in delighted spasms of laughter and me in misery. My mother could not see from behind her tea-urn what was going on, and father never saw or heard anything. But at last Ned undertook to slap down as a gauntlet each plate and dish before his foe, and his mutterings began to grow audible. One day, on seeing Fred pay some little attention to mother, he spoke too loud for further ignoring.

"I sees yer, I sees yer, 'deed I does. Throwin' cobs at de cow, is yer? Yes, to make de ca'f take notice. Yer don't git dis yer ca'f, ef Ned kin help it—naw, sir."

This was too much. My patience was exhausted and I complained to father.

At the next meal my remonstrance took effect. Just as Ned was indulging in an unusually horrible contortion of his visage, and as my delighted brother John was stuffing all of his handkerchief into his mouth, my father looked up suddenly and bent his white brows on Ned until they met in a straight line over his blue eyes. Thus he continued to gaze at him until the embarrassed negro managed to get himself out of the room. Then, turning to the now sober John, father significantly motioned to the door, through which the scared boy escaped, glad to get off so easily.

My father never used unnecessary words, and as he knew none were needed to meet this occasion, none were said, and at least outward peace reigned until the inevitable first lover's quarrel arose. Then Ned was one broad grin He seemed to scent danger for the hated intruder, and he hung about Barbara, perfectly happy in the fact that she, as in her childish troubles, seemed to prefer his constant attendance to anything else.

I was never quite able to make out what this quarrel was about, though it lasted several days, but it was not difficult to see that Barbara was behaving like the spoiled baby she was, and that Fred was very patient, more patient than I for him, for at last, finding Barbara alone in the library, I administered the good round scolding that I thought she needed. Unused as she was to any harshness, it did not take long to reduce her to floods of tears, and she was sobbing her heart out, apparently, when Fred entered the room.

As I closed the library door behind me two minutes after his entrance, it was with the fixed opinion, which I have seen no reason to alter since, that the male or female who attempts to interfere with even the potentially married is a fool. What conclusions the lovers came to in their prolonged reconciliation I do not know. When we all met in the drawing-room in the evening Barbara appeared her old bewitching self, supremely happy and contented. What arguments had been used to work the change I never asked, and Barbara never told me. However it may have been, the result was satisfactory.

Fred was a trifle more communicative, but indirectly. Taking me into a corner later in the evening, he gravely inquired if I thought my father would object to his taking Ned out into the yard and wringing his neck.

"If he did not, Barbara would," I replied. "What has poor Ned been doing now?"

"Poor Ned, indeed! He has been abusing me as usual. I was at my innocent devotions this afternoon, worshipping at my shrine in the attitude common to worshippers of every faith and clime, when he attacked me. Elizabeth, being behind the scenes, why did you not intercept the afternoon tea-tray brought in by Ned with catlike steps and handed to Barbara over my devoted head and prostrate form? I had two horrible alternatives: to rise suddenly to my feet, thereby upsetting the tray and all its contents, or to crab out sidewise. I chose the latter, and even as I emerged was offered tea by my tormentor with respectful gravity."

"What did Barbara do?" I asked, laughing heartily.

"Why, Barbara came to my rescue nobly. She reproved Ned scathingly and with the air of an insulted princess for putting only one lump of sugar in her tea—I think that was it."

"Reproved Ned! and before you!" I cried. "Then, indeed, she punished him. The jealous hatred he bears you is beyond words. My impression is that he is not going to put up with your presence much longer. I have been for some time expecting a messenger for Ned from Lord Concarson necessitating a voyage to the Island of the Dardenelles."

"Not he!" cried Fred. "No such luck for poor me!"

I was nearer right than I thought. The next morning brought with it the news that Ned was off again, and with no farewell message except a box of dainty sweets tied to Barbara's door-knob.

We thought a couple of days at most would see Ned in his place again. But no—Barbara had gone over to the enemy; his own eyes had seen incontestable proof of a complete reconciliation. It was not to be borne, and shaking the dust from his feet, Ned departed in earnest.

Perhaps it was for the best. Barbara missed him sadly and grieved long over his absence, repenting often her hasty words. But as the days went by she grew more and more absorbed in her lover, and I do not think Ned's jealous heart could have borne the sight. And when Barbara's wedding-day came and our clinging little Princess was taken from us, I thought of Ned and rejoiced in his absence, believing that his undisciplined nature would have suffered a pang ten times sharper than mine.

But Barbara had not seen her faithful servant for the last time. She was soon to meet him again. And of this meeting I have heard the story so often that it has grown impossible for me to feel that I was not there in person, so I shall tell it as if such were the fact.

Fred and Barbara seemed inclined to spend the rest of their lives in one prolonged wedding journey. Every day they determined to set their face toward home to-morrow, and each to-morrow found them lingering. Drifting about in this way, they strolled one noon into the dining-room of a New York hotel and sat awaiting their luncheon. The waiters were all negroes, and as Barbara idly looked at them, thinking how natural their dusky faces appeared to her Southern eyes, her attention was caught by something familiar in the figure of the head waiter, whose back was towards her. Suddenly he turned, and Ned and his "Miss Princess" were face to face.

In the joy of that meeting, even the man who had stolen his treasure was forgiven. He had no words too eloquent to express his passionate delight, no entreaties too urgent to implore their stay. The best that the hotel could offer was theirs, and no hands but Ned's were allowed to proffer the dishes. Barbara's happiness was but little less than his, and when they left the dining-room after the prolonged meal, it was with the promise to make their stay an extended one. With this understanding, Ned bade them a reluctant farewell for the afternoon.

But in an hour or so a message was brought to him that Mrs. Damer wished to see him in her sitting-room. He found her alone, lying in a corner of the low divan, looking pale and suffering.

"Ah, Ned," she cried as he entered, "my head does ache so! I have been to see Aunt Mary, and she keeps her house as hot here as she did when she lived at home. It made me so ill—just as it used to!"

Ned was all tender sympathy. She was his little mistress once more and he was her great, gentle nurse. He brought her a cup of strong tea made by his own hands. Had she asked for nightingales' tongues he would have produced them somehow. Barbara sipped the fragrant tea and listened to the familiar voice contentedly.

"Ned," she said, looking up at him suddenly, "why did you run away?"

For a moment Ned's composure failed him and his eyes dropped. Then a smile crept over his face.

"Yer see, honey," he said, "I was jest 'bleeged to go. My Lord Concarson, he don' sen' fer dis nigger deep in de night an' all de way from de Islant of Dardanelles, lessen he means business. I didn't even have de time fer to say good-bye to my pretty baby."

Barbara listened with soft laughter.

"Ned," she said, "tell me about the Island of Dardanelles."

Ned obediently began a long fallacious tale of a lovely, lonely land, a land of tropic growth and splendour. The story was such as he had told Barbara over and over again in her baby days. Gradually her eyelids sleepily drooped and fell; opened, drooped again, and then, under the spell of the familiar phrases, she fell asleep.

• • • • •

"Fire! Fire!"

The dining-room of the hotel where Ned was in charge was somewhat apart from the rest of the building; so this probably was the last place where the alarm of fire was heard when it broke out in the hotel, not an hour after Ned had left Barbara's side. His first thought was for her safety, and he rushed from the dining-room, through the hall and up the main stairway which led to her rooms.

The hallways were full of screaming women and children, and were thick with smoke. Great clouds were rolling in from every side. On the first landing Ned met Barbara's husband, a baby in either arm, and a half-fainting woman clinging to his shoulder.

"Miss Barbara!" gasped Ned.

"Safe," was the laconic answer as Fred bundled the babies into Ned's arms and caught the tottering woman.

The fire had been smouldering too long before being discovered to think of saving much more than human life now that the flames had broken out, and it required brave and determined efforts to accomplish even this. At last the order was issued by the captain of the fire brigade that no one should further risk life and limb by re-entering the doomed building. Ned had been foremost among the workers, and he now prepared to enjoy himself.

An African is always a voluptuary in his pleasures, and abandoning himself with true negro delight to the sway of excitement, Ned drifted about with the seething and twisting of the crowd, until he found himself standing close by Fred's side. He then resisted the pressure which was bearing him forward and spoke reproachfully.

"I jes' hope you got Miss Princess a-lookin' at dis yer fire from somewhar. She allays did love a fire. Many's de one I done tuk her too outen de back gate, when ole Miss think she war in de nuss'ry an' I war in de woodhus. Thar warn't none on it she didn't see a-sittin' up on my shoulder an' crowin' like a little rooster. Ole Miss, she cot me takin' her out onct; and she did raise! I disremember jes' what she tol' me, but I know I ain't tuk de chile no mo'. Ho! ho!"

Fred listened with much amusement.

"I am afraid your Miss Barbara cannot see this fire from where she is," he said. "I took her across the city early this afternoon to visit her aunt. It is not my fault that she is not with me. They didn't want me, and told me so."

"An' yer ain't seen Miss Barbara sence de fire broke out?"

"No—for Heaven's sake, man, what is the matter with you?"

The two faces looked into each other—a strange contrast. One with staring white eyeballs and eyes full of a horrible intelligence—the other white and ghastly with its dawning terror.

No further words were needed. Both men turned and sprang forward as moved by one muscle. But the action of the negro was with hand and foot. A well-directed blow from his ponderous fist made the husband of his young mistress stagger, and when he recovered his footing Ned had gained a moment's advantage and was cleaving his way through the crowd, which opened for him as did the Red Sea for Moses—"a wall on the right hand and on the left."

As he reached the door of the burning building his path was barred by a fireman in his full panoply and power of office.

"Git out, ye black fool!" he shouted in unmistakable Irish.

Out swept that powerful black arm, and with what seemed but a gesture, the burly Irishman was brushed aside. The next moment Ned was up the deserted stairway, and had gained the first landing. Here he paused. There was now no one to bar his progress but death, clad in his most fearful terrors.

The negro stooped and began to draw off his boots.

The stairway hung by a thread, and his step must be cat-like. He cast one look back into the surging mass of life below, and saw there a man struggling vainly in the grasp of a dozen hands. He heard a hoarse voice crying:

"Let me go! My wife is in that place!"

Above the roar of the fire, above the shout of many voices, rose the stentorian tones of the captain of the brigade.

"Hold on to him, boys, hold on to him. There's one chance in a hundred, and that hangs on those steps. There shan't be a foot set on 'em."

Ned heard, saw, and was satisfied that the first part of his mission was accomplished. He set his bared foot on the charred steps and began the ascent, the first turn hiding him from the eyes of the crowd below.

A death-like silence fell on the multitude, a silence rendering more horribly audible the resistless, sullen roar of the fire, which licked and curled about the eaves of the house, and which the hissing water seemed but to feed. Great tongues of flame broke from one window and another. A woman's hysterical sobs alone broke the stillness, and she was sternly hushed.

Barbara's husband ceased to struggle in the firemen's grasp.

Have you ever known what waiting means known more than its impatient restlessness? Have you ever felt that stopping of the heart's pulses for one moment of anxious listening, and then at some sound the wild rush and thunder of the blood in your veins, the agony of the clutch at your very life and being, your breath stopped in your throat? If you have never known all this, you have never known waiting, and you may pray heaven to spare you that knowledge. This suffering and this knowledge are Frederick Damer's.

Crash!

A cry rose from the listening crowd in answer to the sound, and the woman who had sobbed before was carried away fainting.

"Thank goodness, it's only the lower stairway gone," said the captain. "The landing still holds. I can reach it with a ladder. Get me one."

"I'll go with you," said a quiet, determined voice beside him. It was Barbara's husband.

The captain turned and looked at him closely; apparently what he saw satisfied him.

"Yes, sir," he answered calmly. "Give him your helmet, Jack. We must go now, sir. I hear them on the stair."

They entered the burning house together. At any moment the roof might fall. Four lives were now in jeopardy where two had stood before. The sound of a footfall slowly became an established fact.

"That ain't but one person walking, sir," said the captain gently, "and you'd best not hope, for that foot's bare."

"Then he is carrying her," said Fred, and again nothing but the dread fire sounds and that stealthy footfall broke the silence.

At last! at last! Out of the smoke, out of the flame, on to the frail platform, stepped the gigantic negro, his clothes literally torn and burned from his body; the blood streaming from a ghastly wound in his head; his breath coming in sobs like those of a wounded stag; but in his arms, gathered close to his breast, her fair curls gleaming in its blackness, lay the unconscious form of his Miss Barbara.

Once more he was carrying her safely home from a fire, and now, indeed, for the last time. By the help of the two waiting men the descent of the ladder was made, and Barbara lay in her husband's arms. Even at this supreme moment, he observed with a rush of grateful emotion that the blanket in which she was swathed had been saturated in water.

As the rescuer and the rescued passed out from the

blazing house, a wild shout burst from the excited crowd, which pressed forward beyond control. But even as his dimmed sense heard the cries as the blessed air of heaven smote upon him, Ned staggered and dropped to the ground. The blood gushed out from his ears and mouth. He was picked up by strong hands and carried into a neighbouring house, where at least there were quiet and care.

In another room in the same building Barbara lay, still unconscious; but the swoon caused by fright and shock soon yielded to treatment, and she awoke, crying hysterically for "Mother!" and clinging nervously to her husband.

But her first fully conscious thought was for Ned. Fred could not command his voice to answer her eager, persistent questions, and it was the physician in charge who gently broke to her the news of his danger, and who left her in order to seek the latest report of his condition.

In these few moments, alone with the wife "brought to him like Alcestis from the grave," I think we may forgive a brief forgetfulness of the Hercules whose gift she was; but it was with a sense of remorseful awakening that Fred looked at the grave face of the physician as he entered, saying, "I can give you but little encouragement."

"Oh, no! no!" cried Barbara. "You can, you must save him! Go to him, both of you. I promise to be perfectly quiet. I won't move—only go, oh, go!"

As the door closed behind the two men, Fred turned to the physician with an inquiring look, and was answered by a shrug of the shoulders and an outward motion of the hands, more expressive than any words. Everything that skill could do had been done, but from the first it needed no medical verdict to tell that there was no hope.

Ned did not seem to suffer, but lay almost unconscious, breathing heavily. Fred, bending over him in an agony of grateful pity, saw his lips move, and bending nearer, thought he heard him whisper, "Miss Princess."

"Shall I bring her to you?" he asked, and waiting for no answer, went hastily for his wife.

She started up with eager eyes as he entered, "Is there no hope?" she cried.

"There has been none from the first," he answered "Dear, he is asking for you. Can you bear it? There is not a moment to lose."

"Oh, take me to him quickly, quickly."

He lifted her tenderly, and half-led, half-carried her to the room of the dying man. But in his short absence there had been a change in the sufferer. Agony had partially restored consciousness, and each breath was a moan.

"Come, Lord, come! Oh, Lord, come git me!" he was crying feebly as they entered the room.

"Love, it is too late. You must not stay now, nor would he wish it."

But Barbara broke from her husband's detaining arm, and threw herself on her knees by the bedside.

Her presence seemed to rouse him. He opened his eyes and looked at her tearful face. "'Tain't so terrible bad, darlin'," he gasped brokenly. "I ain't a-cryin' none—jis' whisperin' to de Lord, jis' whisperin' to de Lord."

Barbara buried her face in the bedside and burst into a passion of tears. Her husband stepped forward to draw her away, fearing that she might disturb the dying man, but Ned seemed to divine his intention and, rallying his strength, laid a detaining hand on her sunny curls, raising her face to his sight.

"Don't take on so, darlin'," he whispered. "I's got to go; but I ain't goin' fur, honey, not to say fur." A gleam of the old humour shot across his face "Ned only gwine to de Islant of Dardanelles, honey, fer to wait on my Lord Con——"

A sudden shudder shook his whole frame; his face was contorted in agony. Barbara's husband laid his hand quickly across her eyes to shut out the sight.

And when he drew it away again all was over. Ned had at last made his voyage to the Blessed Isles, and was waiting upon his Lord—whose name was not Concarson.

"TO THE BOYS!"

Here's a health to the humorists everywhere,
Who help to free life from its lumbering care;
Who show poor humanity how to unload
Their cares by a process of fun *à la mode*.
Whether story with plot so intense,
Or a joke with a climax immense,
Or a pun with no glimmer of sense,
Or an anecdote getting quite old,
So often it now has been told,
Though the crowd will greet
"Ole frens" whom they meet
With a rollicking shout,
They'd never let out
For the newest pun
Under the sun,
Then strong
And long,
Prolong
Song,
And toast
Our boast.
Laugh,
Quaff,
To the funny men,
Who, with tongue and pen,
"Come up all smiling" again and again!

DIMPLE AND DUMPLING.

There was only one chair vacant in a barber's shop the other day when a tall young man, accompanied by a lady and a lovely little girl of five, entered, and calling the head barber to one side, gave him a few explicit directions. Then the little girl's hat was removed, and the barber enveloped her in one of the big white aprons.

The young man lifted her up into the barber's chair with a whispered word of reassurance, and the lady, after kissing her, passed her hands caressingly over all the beautiful golden brown curls. Then she sat down in a corner where the child could not see her face and pulled out her pocket-handkerchief.

By this time the occupants of the five other chairs had become vastly interested. All eyes were fixed on the sweet baby face with its curly halo. It was a pale little face, and there were no rosebuds on its cheeks, but above them were two glorious grey eyes that shone like a pair of stars. On each side of the little face rested a particularly fat curl. The child placed her hand upon each as the barber advanced with the big shears, and gazed beseechingly up into his face.

"Now, Mr. Barber, I want you to leave Dimple and Dumpling until the very last—cut all the rest of them off first, please. I shall miss them dreffully, you know; me and Dimple and Dumpling has always been such friends. Dimple is going out to my papa in a letter. My papa is out in Ceylon, you know. You haven't got a papa out in Ceylon, Mr. Barber?"

"No, miss, I ain't got none at all."

"And haven't you got a mamma, Mr. Barber? My mamma is going to put Dumpling into her 'Don't You Remember' box. Did you ever see a 'Don't You Remember' box, Mr. Barber?"

"No, miss, I never did."

"Mamma's has got such a funny lot of things in it. There's a little bit of orange blossom, and a little pinafore that Alec used to wear. That's Alec over there by the window. And there's a little red shoe that was our little bruffer's. His name was Robin, and he died before any of us was borned, you know."

At this moment the mother stepped forward and whispered to the little girl. There was an old gentleman with a very red face in one of the chairs who shook like a veritable jelly at the child's remarks. Big brother Alec was blushing furiously and the whole shop was all agog.

There was silence for a moment or two, while the scissors went snip, snip, snip. Then the little prattler broke forth again.

"Mamma says I'm talking too much, Mr. Barber; but if I don't talk I shall begin to cry. I cried awfully yesterday, you know; so did mamma and nurse. That was when the doctor came and said they'd have to be cutted off. We all cried—'cept Cecil. He's eight years old. He never cries—'cepting when mamma spanks him. Then he howls. But at last I stopped crying, for Alec said he'd take me to lunch with him when we came in to have it done; nurse said she'd let me set up till half-past seven for a whole week; mamma's going to get me a silver thimble, and cook is going to have tea-cakes for tea when we get back. Do you like tea-cakes, Mr. Barber?"

The barber replied in the affirmative, and then there was silence for a little while.

"Have you got a sweetheart, Mr. Barber?" A titter ran round the room, and the barber turned as red as a turkey-cock, but he replied in the negative.

"Alec's got one," pursued the child. "He goes to tea with her on Sunday. Cecil says he's awfully sweet on her. Cecil knows, too; he was under the sofa when——"

But Alec waited to hear no further. He bolted bodily and waited at the corner until the ordeal was at an end. The lady arose and whispered some further cautions, but they proved of no avail.

"Well, Mr. Barber, if you haven't got any sweetheart or papa or mamma, you must be a norphan. Are you a norphan, Mr. Barber?"

The man nodded his head and then asked his questioner to keep her head still, like a good girl.

Another pause. Then:

"Mr. Barber?"

"Yes, miss."

"If you is a norphan what does you say when you go to bed? You can't say 'God bless papa and mamma' any more. I'm very glad I'm not a norphan."

There was a dead silence in the room after that until the red-faced old gentleman blew his nose. The barber's task was almost finished now.

"What's the matter, mamma? You're cryin'."

"Why, no, I'm not, Lena. What makes——"

"Oh, but yes you are, mamma. I can hear you sniffling, and besides, I can see your face in the looking-glass. There's two big tears running down your nose."

"Now, miss, just please sit steady a minute."

The scissors gave a snip, and poor Dumpling fell down into her lap. Dimple followed an instant later, and the child gazed ruefully at the two beautiful severed curls.

"Good-bye, Dumpling and Dimple," she said, and the tears began to gather. They almost overflowed a moment later as the barber lifted her from the chair and she walked to the long mirror to survey herself. But her mother was equal to the emergency. Before Lena had time to realise her changed appearance she called to her to come and help her put Dimple into the letter for Ceylon. The mother wound the two curls about her finger and then tied a little bit of blue ribbon round each of them. She put Dumpling away in her reticule and Dimple was placed among the closely-writtten sheets of foreign paper which she took out of an envelope. The letter was sealed then, and after that they arose to go.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Barber," said the little child, holding her hand out. "When me and Cecil get whiskers we'll come to you to cut them off. Do you play foot-ball, Mr. Barber? 'Cause if you do I going to give you a present. Would you like a ticket for our foot-ball match, Mr. Barber?"

She pulled out a little bit of pasteboard from her pocket and handed it to him:

GRAND FOOTBALL MATCH.

DICK TURPINS VS.
TUSCARORANS.
Admishun, 3 Pins.

"Cecil is captain of the Dick Turpins, and he said now that I was going to have my hair cut off I'd be just as good as a boy. So he's going to lend me a pair of his knickers and I'm to be half-back."

A roar arose from each respective chair; as for the jolly old gentleman, he collapsed utterly. In the midst of the confusion the lady tried to escape, but Lena's hat had to be put on and that caused still another delay.

"No more knots in the morning now, mamma,' remarked the young lady as she put it on. But then she drew a very long face. "O mamma, it wobbles dreadfully."

The barber then slipped some paper inside the lining of the hat and they set off.

But just at the doorway the red-faced old gentleman accosted them. He had his hat on by this time, but he took it off immediately and made a most courteous bow.

"Madam," he exclaimed, "there are two things I want particularly, and you can grant me both of them. I want a kiss from that little daughter of yours and a ticket for that foot-ball match. I can't pay the price of admission, for I haven't three pins to my name, but perhaps this," and as he spoke he slipped something bright and shiny into Lena's hand, "to be devoted to sweets after the Tuscarorans have been completely done up, might answer the purpose just as well."

The lady smiled and allowed Lena to give him the desired kiss, and a ticket of "admishun," but she handed him back the money and could not be prevailed upon to accept it. Then with a parting nod to the barber the two joined Alec at the corner. When last seen Lena was lifted up to the letter-box to dispatch Dimple on the first stage of its long journey, and the red-faced gentleman, as he lost sight of her in the crowd, vowed fervently that he would see that game of football, even if it cost a leg.

Jones is now of opinion that what the belated husband needs is a keyhole as large as a horse collar, so that he can stick his head through it and call his wife to come down and open the door.

Auntie: "You must run in, Dolly; it is bed-time.'

Dolly: "But why don't you go to bed, too, if it's quite time?"

Auntie: "I'm not a child, my dear. It is different."

Dolly: "Yes, you is a child. I've seen Mr. Jones nursing you."

Minister: "So you go to school, do you, Bobby?"

Bobby: "Yes, sir."

"Let me hear how you spell bread."

"B-r-e-d."

"Webster spells it with an *a*, Bobby."

"Yes, sir; but you didn't ask me how Webster spells it; you asked me how *I* spell it.'

A clergyman recently said that he was engaged to preach to his Sunday school, but that, after the little people were all arranged before him in order, he told them that some of them might be weary and want to go out before he had finished, so he would rather have any one who fancied they would like, to do so now, when no one would be disturbed. For a few moments all sat still; then one little fellow took up his hat and went down the aisle, and another and another followed, until not a child was left.

£10 PRIZE FOR THE INGENIOUS.

On pages 16 and 17 of this number appears a story entitled The Curious Case of Charles Casallis. The perusal of this story will show that its hero disappears in a most mysterious manner, and is met several years afterwards in India by the narrator of the tale.

The circumstances under which the disappearance took place are fully detailed in the story, and a prize of £10 is offered to the reader who sends an explanation of the mystery most nearly resembling that devised by the author of the tale.

Attempts to solve the mystery must not exceed 300 words, and must reach the offices of *Pearson's Weekly*, Temple Chambers, London, E.C., at latest by first post on Saturday, December 31st, marked Casallis.

APPOINTED BY SPECIAL ROYAL WARRANT

SOAP MAKERS TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

The Wedding Morning.

What happy recollections the above Picture recalls to those who have helped a Bride with her toilet. iends ask themselves, Has the Bride a thorough knowledge of all the duties of a household, especially that ever-recurring worry, Washing Day and Spring Cleaning? Does she know what

SUNLIGHT SOAP

n do? Does she know that for a few pence, without boiling or bleaching, she can, by using SUNLIGHT OAP, have all the household linen washed at home and made to look white as snow and fresh as roses?

Happy is the bride who has been instructed in these matters, because it is on such simple household tails as these that the future happiness and comfort of herself and husband must depend!

A TERRIBLE SIGHT.

I saw a peacock with a fiery tail
I saw a blazing comet pour down hail
I saw a cloud all wrapt with ivy round
I saw a lofty oak creep on the ground
I saw a beetle swallow up a whale
I saw a foaming sea brimful of ale
I saw a pewter cup sixteen feet deep
I saw a well full of men's tears that weep
I saw wet eyes in flames of living fire
I saw a house as high as the moon and higher
I saw the glorious sun at deep midnight
I saw the man who saw this wondrous sight.

If a semicolon be placed after the noun in each line except the last, this absurd jingle will be resolved into sobriety. Here is another of the same kind:—

I saw a pack of cards gnawing a bone
I saw a dog seated on Britain's throne
I saw King George shut up within a box
I saw an orange driving a fat ox
I saw a butcher not a twelvemonth old
I saw a greatcoat all of solid gold
I saw two buttons telling of their dreams
I saw my friends who wished I'd quit these themes.

THE TRAGEDY AT THE CLIFF.

It was the month of September in the Pyrenees, and an admirable situation in the neighbourhood of Cauterets. Mountains surrounded them on all sides, mountains of every kind and description, high, low, straight, hump-backed, deformed, and enormous, and each and all of them with a rosy tuft of sunshine glowing upon their summits.

The two friends, Colonel K—— and Captain Z——, were making the ascent together. Colonel K—— was an ex-soldier, grey, weather-beaten, old and armless, one having been taken off by a cannon-ball in the war of 1870, the other cut off in a surgical operation necessitated by a dangerous wound in the hand and wrist. Z——, on the contrary, was gay, handsome, and young.

But there was still another member of the ascending party whom as yet we have failed to mention—the wife of Colonel K——, a young woman of twenty-five years of age, and one of those lovely beings before whom you stand in speechless admiration or love to madness.

Although they had been married for more than seven years, her husband still felt for her a love as strong and deep as on the day he led her from the altar a bride.

That is to say, one of those absorbing, ungovernable affections, frequently the most frightful calamity that can befall a man past the meridian of life, particularly a man who has suffered the loss of both arms.

The three tourists, who had gone over the route before and were thoroughly familiar with its devious windings, declined the services of the regular guides, and climbed the precipitous slope, sometimes together, sometimes separately, now and then, as they stopped to look across the valley, to admire the pines, the cascades, the torrents, the clouds, and far above the clouds, the sun-crowned mountains, losing sight of each other completely.

All at once, on issuing from a tangled cross-path which he had taken as a short cut to rejoin his companions, K—— uttered a terrible cry, the cry of a man who receives without warning a deadly wound, for there before him, standing upon the edge of what was known in the Pyrenees as the "Devil's Hole," the steepest and most dangerous chasm in the range, were his wife and his friend, Captain Z——, locked in each other's arms.

The colonel darted towards them, but hastily checked himself with a new cry of horror. Terrified and unnerved by the appearance of her husband, Mme. K—— had made an incautious movement, her foot slipped, and a moment later she was lost to sight in the depths of the abyss.

With a bound the colonel stood upon the edge of the gulf. It was horrible, horrible even to look upon, for his wife was still rolling, and still whirling from rock to rock, tumbling, bounding and striking here and there with the force of an avalanche, and always, always falling!

The two men watched her with anguished eyes, neither of them uttering a syllable after the first involuntary shout of alarm.

Without a word, without a tear or a glance in the direction of the man who had betrayed him, K——, descending by the narrow pathway and running as fast as he could go, his head bent, his grey hair flying in the wind, and the remnants of his arms hanging from his shoulders like the dropping wings of a mutilated bird, made his way to the foot of the precipice to gather up if possible all that remained of the woman who had once been his wife.

But even there he found himself still unable to approach her—a foaming torrent ran between the road and the place where Mme. K—— was lying, a torrent wide, deep and impassable. Nothing could be done, either by him or by others—the remains of the dead must decay where it had fallen!

. . . . . .

The sun had scarcely risen on the morning following this frightful tragedy, when there was a rap at the door of the captain's chamber and K—— entered the room, the glare of a madman shining in his eyes.

"In view of what occurred yesterday," said he, approaching the window, and placing himself before his rival, sitting there in the motionless apathy of utter misery, "it is useless for me to tell you that I have the right and have come to kill you."

"You have the right," Z—— responded, quietly; "I do not deny it, and am at your service when and where you please."

"But all the same," K—— continued, "since I am armless I cannot kill you in the regular duel; I should simply lose my life for nothing. Nevertheless, as your life belongs to me, I have the right to take it as I please, when I please, and in the way that suits me best; is it not so, monsieur?" And the colonel bent upon the man before him a look that scorched like flame.

"It is so," the other answered; "I do not dispute it, and repeat that I am at your service in any way you may elect."

"Then bring me my pistols, Etienne," turning to the servant who had followed him into the room; "bring me my pistols, and place one between my knee."

Etienne obeyed, and the colonel drew the trigger with a movement of the knee-pan. The bullet, however, though the captain had not stirred in his chair, flew wide of the mark, burying itself in the woodwork overhead.

"A carbine, Etienne?" the colonel commanded; "a carbine at once, the chance will be better with that."

But the ball of the carbine, badly aimed as the pistol had been, went equally astray: his adversary remained untouched!

"Great heavens!" cried the colonel, hoarsely; "before me is the man whom I loved and trusted, the Judas who would have betrayed me, yet I am powerless to avenge myself!" and with a groan of agony he bowed his head upon his breast.

"But you are wrong," cried Z—— at last, half dead with shame and grief; "you are wrong, for if you wish it I will kill myself under your very eyes. Give me the pistol and you will see that I can at least keep my word!"

"No!" thundered the veteran, with a sudden movement; "a death like that is not for you; but come with me at once, I command you!" and with a gesture of dismissal to the waiting servant, he went out from the apartment and took the footpath leading up the mountain, the mountain they had ascended the day before.

Half way to the summit they were joined by one of the mountain guides always waiting and ready to conduct the traveller through these dangerous and bewildering defiles. Wrapped in their sombre and miserable memories they scarcely ever heard what he was saying to them, as, taking their silence for assent he turned about and tramped by their side.

"This, gentlemen," he cried abruptly, on arriving at a little promontory almost within sight of the fatal spot, "is the most interesting view in all the moutains. There to the right is the village of C——, with its grand and historical chateau; there to the left the little river P——, which turns the famous factories of L——, whose productions are the marvels of the expositions; and yonder the Devil's Hole."

Z——, who had guessed the errand on which they were going, shuddered and turned pale as they neared the horrible place, but the colonel walked ahead of him, stern, erect, and inflexible as death, strengthening his determination from time to time by gazing upon the rocks below them and upon a certain sharp and slender torrent—the torrent that separated him from those crushed and battered remains.

The morning was a beautiful one, soft, clean, and rosy, a counterpart, in fact, to that of yesterday when they had started on the trip which ended so disastrously.

The sun, just rising from his bed among the clouds, cast upon the mountain crests a golden halo; the cedars in the gorges murmured plaintively, and the atmosphere was as bracing as wine; in truth, it was a day when even the most despairing of men, despite their griefs or burdens, find it good simply to live.

"And do you see that rock, gentlemen," the guide continued, "and the tree below the cliff that overhangs the Devil's Hole? It's a dangerous, though famous, place, for there it was that the illustrious Comte de M—— brought his army across the Pyrenees in the year 15—. But it's a dangerous place, all the same. No later than yesterday an unfortunate tourist rambling in our mountains fell from the top of that narrow pathway. With my glasses you can see her now, lying at the bottom where she fell, for no one can ever reach her."

This was too much, too harrowing, even for the nerves of the implacable husband, and the guide was dismissed with the usual toll. He could tell his tale to others, but not to them, for they knew it too well already.

Twenty minutes later Colonel K—— and Captain Z—— stood again upon the cliff above the "Devil's Hole." All about them were evidences of that fatal misstep—a bit of broken vine, a loosened stone, and on the ground at the edge of the abyss itself distinct impressions of the dead woman's feet. Drops of blood and shreds of tattered clothing still clung to the rocks over which her body had rolled in falling.

The captain trembled upon his legs as once more he viewed these accusing witnesses. Nevertheless, as he was a man of courage, he obeyed without a word or protest when the colonel called to him "to place himself there," indicating the spot where those tiny footprints marked the beginning of the catastrophe.

A great wave of sunlight fell upon his eyes and gleamed upon the shrubbery, swaying in the breeze, but he stood with his face to the mountain; not even now, with shame and dishonour pressing heavily upon him, would he consent to turn his back upon a foe.

"In a moment," cried the colonel solemnly, approaching nearer, and for the first time since they had began the ascent, directly addressing his companion, "in a moment I shall send you after the woman you would have taught to betray me—yonder—below!" and he nodded to the bottom, where, dark and motionless against the gray of the stones, rested all that remained of the unhappy Mme. K——. "I will kick you from the cliff," he continued; "you shall fall as she fell; the rocks shall rend, the tree limbs tear you——"

All at once he checked himself, pierced by a horrible thought. If he does what he has come to do, if he sends the body of the man who has supplanted him in the heart of his wife crashing upon the rocks to join her, it must remain there for all eternity at the foot of that frightful precipice, and side by side with the woman he had loved so well! In death they will rest together!

He trembles like a man in moral agony; his throat contracts and a burning sweat pours from his body.

"No, no!" he shouts in sudden frenzy; "a thousand times no!" pushing aside his rival with a movement of his shoulder. "Anything is perferable to that!" and with a hoarse and mournful cry he flings himself into the depths. At least he will sleep beside her first!

He (who is going abroad to seek his fortune): "You'll be true to me, won't you, darling?"

"She: "Ye—yes, George, if you're successful."

SMITH: "I say, Smythe!"

Smythe (who is running at the top of his speed stops): "Well, what is it? Hurry up (puff, puff), please. I have only two minutes to——"

Smith: "I merely wanted to say that you'd lose your train if you didn't hurry up."

A MONTH before the bombardment of Fort Fisher in the last American war began, the celebrated powder explosion occurred which was intended to blow down this solid earthwork, a mile in extent, with forty-foot traverses every few yards.. Its failure was ridiculous. That night, after the explosion of the powder-ship, some pickets on the beach were captured and carried on board the admiral's ship. Among them was a very solemn-looking soldier, who sat silently and sadly chewing tobacco. As there was intense curiosity among the officers of the fleet to know the result of the remarkable experiment, one of them asked the solemn-looking "Reb" if he was in fort when the powder-ship exploded; to which he replied in the affirmative, but without exhibiting the least interest in the matter; whereupon the officers gathered around him and began to ask questions.

"You say you were inside the fort?"

"Yaas, I was thar."

"What was the effect of the explosion?"

"Mighty bad, sir—powerful bad!"

"Well, what was it!"

"Why, stranger, it waked up pretty nigh every man in the fort!"

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"THE LOSER PAYS,"

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HOW A DUEL WAS AVERTED.

I PASSED, yesterday, in Pall Mall, a man who, not being able to hit a hay-stack, yet once acquired the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in all Paris.

In the summer of 1871, when Martin G. Scott was a much slimmer, more dandified-looking man than he is now—for he is married, and with the acquisition of a wife and three babies he has put away the vanities of dress—there were seated at one of the little round marble tables before the Café Ricci, in the Boulevard des Italiens, two young Frenchmen, the cheek of one of whom bore a red mark as if some one had brought his hand sharply against it.

In an inner room of the café, the person who had done this was engaged in wiping away from his shirt-front the stains of some red wine, which in his fury the recipient of the slap had hurled across the table. The man with the red cheek was the young Adolphe Ferrier, the son of the celebrated artist of that name. The man with the soiled shirt-front was Martin Scott, of London.

There had been an exchange of cards, and Scott and his friend, George Wainwright, twelve hours later, suddenly found themselves with a large-sized, healthy French quarrel on their hands, to be settled, as most of these matters are in France, under the code.

When it came to a choice of weapons, Scott had wisely chosen pistols, for while he was a notoriously bad shot, he was totally ignorant of the use of the rapier.

The rapier, too, is a weapon in the use of which the gilded youth of Paris excel. Two years in the students' quarter had doubtless enabled Scott's opponent to become expert with the weapon. That is why, on Wainwright's advice, Scott chose pistols.

The affair was to come off at Auvergne, a little village distant about nine miles from Paris, in forty-eight hours' time. The parties were to go out on the early train.

I doubt if Scott was so much cut up about the affair as Wainwright, even though he fully expected to be killed. Wainwright kept on blaming himself for ever having let his friend get into a such a scrape. They had been college chums together, and Scott's father had paid for the trip, simply providing that Wainwright, the elder of the two, and in whom he placed implicit confidence, should see that Scott was well looked after.

Here he was seconding his benefactor's son in a duel to the death. It was to be no child's play this time, just something to amuse the readers of the *Petit Journal Pour Rire*. They were to fire at twelve paces, and continue firing until one of the parties was disabled.

The more Wainwright thought over the affair, the more he realised what an awkward job he had upon his hands.

What if his friend should fall! It would be bad enough to face Scott's father with news of such a character, but to communicate such a result to Mary Scott, his friend's pretty sister—to have to confess how poorly he had fulfilled his trust—that, he felt, would be a task beyond his strength.

He lay awake all night at his hotel, revolving some plan by which they could get out of the scrape. This was not so easy, for any scheme he might adopt looking to an avoidance of hostilities must necessarily involve the retirement of his friend with honour, of which he was singularly tenacious.

He had frequently seen Ferrier practising at a fashionable pistol gallery in the Rue du Capucines. He knew that he spent the best part of every evening there in ringing the bell on the target—to accomplish which feat, as every one knows, it is necessary to hit the bull's-eye. Wainwright arose early with a plan fully thought out.

"Come," he said, to Scott, "we haven't too much time before us. We must go down to Maupassant's gallery and get some practice. You stay here and have some breakfast. I don't care to eat so early. I'll run down there and see if we can't get the gallery all to ourselves for a couple of hours."

"That will be pretty costly, won't it?" hazarded Scott.

"Not more than a decent coffin and all the other funeral expenses," replied Wainwright, with some little sarcasm. "If possible I want to throw those expenses on the other fellow."

Wainwright jumped into a cab, and leaving Scott to his reflections and coffee, dashed off to the Gallery Maupassant, where for upwards of half an hour he remained closeted with its proprietor.

"It is agreed, then," said Wainwright, at the conclusion of the interview. "Now, then, Monsieur Maupassant, there are 250 francs down. The remainder of the 500 you get if this duel doesn't come off."

"Agreed," said the Frenchman, and he sat down and wrote at least twenty letters like the following:

"M. Maupassant requests the pleasure of your company to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock to witness the phenomenal shooting of an English gentleman, who has kindly consented to give an exhibition of his skill at that hour."

While M. Maupassant was thus engaged, Wainwright put in a half an hour in the Rue du Petit Champs, where he made sundry purchases, returning with them to the gallery, where the next hour was profitably employed by him in company with an ingenious mechanic.

Meantime, as the idea grew upon the mind of M. Maupassant, he chuckled and wrote, extending his invitations until, if one-half of them were accepted, the question was, Would there be standing-room in the gallery?

"We must certainly go down and see this Englishman shoot," said M. Ferrier's second. "You may find some of his tricks useful to you at Auvergne to-morrow."

M. Ferrier, whose courage was not of the five-o'clock-in-the-morning kind, shivered slightly, though the weather was decidedly warm.

"I wish the fellow had chosen rapiers," he muttered. "These English are such good shots with the pistol."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon.

M. Maupassant's gallery was crowded. M. Ferrier had an excellent seat. He sat talking with his friend and second. He had been drinking somewhat to keep his courage up, and his voice could be heard all over the room. With a Frenchman's love of gossip, his second had talked freely of the meeting of the morrow.

As the Englishman had not yet come, a dozen voices called on Ferrier to step down and have some practice, and amuse the company at the same time.

Ferrier, who was a really good shot, was not a little proud of it, and with such an audience he was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded of displaying his skill.

Throwing off his coat, he stepped down on to the floor of the gallery, and picking up a pistol, marked two bull's-eyes in rapid succession

His third bullet went just above, however, an inch, at least, to the right.

"Your pistol is a little heavy on the trigger, monsieur," said a voice behind him.

Turning quickly, he recognised Wainwright, who was standing quietly by, a smile full of meaning in his blue eyes, as Ferrier, quite disconcerted now, fired again and missed for the second time.

At this moment a side door in the gallery opened, and scrupulously attired, and holding in either hand a long revolver, came Scott, who, being introduced to the audience, bowed, while M. Maupassant said:—

"Monsieur Scott has kindly consented to give us an exhibition with the pistol."

Mr. Scott bowed again, and so much was the attention of the audience riveted upon him that no one noticed Wainwright, standing quietly against the wall, feeling cautiously with his hands behind him for a small, round, white object.

Mr. Scott bowed once more profoundly to his distinguished audience. Especially did he extend his salutation to that portion of the room where, pale as death, now sat the thoroughly alarmed M. Ferrier, and who in the redoubtable English marksman had recognised the man he had insulted at the Café Ricci.

"I will now give you an imitation," said Scott, in an off-hand manner, "of a Western cowboy practising on the head of a tenpenny nail at fifty paces. I will fire first at the large bull's-eye, so as to get my hand in."

He lifted the two revolvers and fired from them alternately, pulling the triggers like lightning. Above the noise of the explosions could be heard the tinkling of the bell as each bullet struck fair and square in the centre.

When the smoke cleared away not a mark was visible on the white portion of the target. He had fired twelve shots and every bullet had struck the bull's eye.

Scott turned and bowed modestly to his audience in acknowledgment of a vociferous round of applause.

As before, he glanced over to the seat occupied by M. Ferrier. The Frenchman's face looked more anxious than ever, and he exchanged hurried whispers with his second.

"I'll now show you, gentlemen," continued Scott, "a somewhat more difficult feat."

He took a pistol and threw it toward the ceiling, and catching it in his hand as it descended, pulled the trigger.

A loud ringing of the bell announced that the bullet had again struck the bull's-eye.

"Mon Dieu!" whispered Ferrier, who was now in a clammy sweat through fear. "He will drop me at the first shot."

Scott now took a small repeating rifle from the hands of M. Maupassant, and placing it over his shoulder turned his back to the target, and faced a large mirror where the same was reflected.

Starting from the firing point and walking slowly toward the mirror, he fixed his eye steadfastly on the reflection of the target and rapidly fired off the Winchester. As before, every one of the sixteen bullets struck the bull's eye and the bell was ringing almost continuously.

A perfect hurricane of applause now shook the gallery. M. Maupassant smiled all over, and several French gentlemen left their seats and crowded around the Englishman, offering their congratulations at the marvellous skill which he had displayed.

Among these latter was the second of M. Ferrier.

"Of course we shall meet you, Monsieur Scott," he said, "but we trust you will spare us. Nobody has a chance who stands up before you."

He was evidently as much frightened as his principal.

Now was Wainwright's opportunity. He stepped forward and said to the little group:

"Gentlemen, can't this matter be patched up in some way? You see the kind of a shot my friend is. He hates to take life."

"I'll see what I can do," said M. Ferrier's second, eagerly, and he dived over to his principal.

"Well, if you won't apologise you're an idiot. This time to-morrow you will be in the hands of the undertaker. I tell you I'll have nothing to do with this murder."

This settled poor Ferrier. Choking down his humiliation, he stammered out—

"Well, you may apologise for me if you like. It's a dreadful thing to do, but I suppose I must. I certainly can't afford to die at my age and with my prospects. But I shall never hold up my head at the club again."

Ferrier's second then tendered a handsome apology to Scott, who, with a magnanimity which provoked applause, thereupon immediately apologised also, which so affected M. Ferrier that, after the fashion of his countrymen, he would have thrown himself on Monsieur Scott's breast and wept.

And thus was the duel between Scott and M. Ferrier neatly averted by the ingenuity of Wainwright.

M. Maupassant was a distinct gainer by the hoax, for in addition to the splendid reputation it gave his gallery, he immediately received the remaining 250 francs from Wainwright. The electric bell, wire, and batteries which Wainwright had purchased that morning and with the aid of the ingenious mechanic put in such admirable working order were also given by Wainwright to the worthy proprietor of the gallery, who instantly disposed of the whole outfit for cash, even to the little button which Wainwright had pressed so efficiently every time his friend Scott fired off his blank cartridges.

And Scott!

Well, he was the hero of Paris for at least a fortnight, and was pointed at on the boulevards as the greatest shot in the world. His popularity continued until a ballet-dancer in black skirts caught the public fancy and cut him out. And thus it is ever with "the bubble, reputation."

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THESE THINGS?

IT is somewhat curious, despite the cynicism of the present age and the growing craze for the abandonment of all things of old fashion, that so many traditions which found birth generations and generations ago should still linger inviolate.

At no period of the year perhaps are folk so credulous, so unthinking, as at Christmas time. The festivity of the season may, in some measure, account for the longevity of Yule Tide superstitions, supposing they are too hollow to bear strict investigation at any other moment than Christmas.

But are these superstitions which were favoured by our ancestors ridiculous? At any rate, to this day there are many hundreds who give absolute credit to them, as every one who has travelled much will agree.

In many parts of England there is an inexplicable dread of turning a mattress on Christmas Day. Women, when making the beds, positively refuse to do it, the supposed penalty being that he or she who turns a mattress on Christmas Day will assuredly die within twelve months.

Yet folk who gravely maintain that the death sentence is pronounced on the turning of a mattress will not hesitate to soundly beat one in order to ensure a comfortable night.

Again, in some counties, if on Christmas morn you ask a man to oblige you with a wax vesta to light your pipe he will politely but resolutely decline. The giving of a match out of doors on Christmas day is supposed to be accompanied by dire results.

In some districts of Northumberland and Durham, and also in Scotland, the country folk are extremely superstitious as to who first enters the house on Christmas morn. Many instances of this have come within the writer's own notice. If a fair-haired person crosses the threshold first, misfortune will attend the family.

If a dark-haired person is the first visitor all may be well. The explanation vouchsafed for this queer belief is that the hair of Judas was red.

No less remarkable than the foregoing is the fact that many old country people still adhere to the preposterous belief that a loaf baked on Christmas Eve never gets mouldy. It can only be supposed that healthy appetites have been the cause of this effort of the imagination not having been exploded long ago.

An individual who dies on Christmas Eve is, paradoxical as it may seem, both pitied and congratulated. He is pitied on account of his lease of life having expired, and congratulated because folk who shake off this mortal coil on Christmas Eve are supposed to be sure of eternal happiness.

In several parts of Devonshire and Cornwall the people are exceedingly superstitious. On the evening preceding Christmas Day cattle are commonly believed to fall down on their knees in adoration of the infant Saviour.

A visit to the meadows would, of course, at once disprove this strange assumption, but considering that in the eyes of these folk the very act of going out for the purpose of witnessing the spectacle is an unpardonable crime, the rash perpetrator of which brings down upon himself and the animals the wrath of the Almighty, the superstition appears in no way likely to die out.

These are a few of the beliefs entertained at Christmas time, in the majority of instances, by country folk. Notwithstanding the volumes of satire poured forth by the *blasé* unbeliever regarding them, they are still so implicitly respected by those of simple tastes and habits that they have well-nigh become a religion.

WHY THE PINE TREES SOB

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN.

Of the six distinct branches of the Pueblo Indians of South-western America, each branch with its own strange language, its little city, republic, and even its own variations upon the fundamental customs of the whole race, the Queres branch is by far the most numerous, counting in all nearly 1,000 souls.

Among the heroes of whom every Queres boy has heard is Ees-tee-ah Muts, the Arrow Boy. He was a great hunter and did many remarkable things, but there was once when all his courage and strength were of no avail, when, but for the help of a little squirrel, he would have perished miserably.

On reaching manhood Ees-tee-ah Muts married the daughter of Kot-chin. She was a very beautiful girl, and her hunter-husband was very fond of her. But, alas! she was secretly a witch, and every night when Ees-tee-ah Muts was asleep she used to fly away to the mountains, where the witches held their uncanny meetings. You must know that these witches have dreadful appetites, and will eat almost anything, and that there is nothing in the world of which they are so fond as boiled baby.

Ees-tee-ah Muts, who was a good man, had no suspicion that his wife was guilty of such practices, and she was very careful to keep him in ignorance of it.

One day, when the witch-wife was planning to go to a meeting, she stole a fat young baby and put it to cook in a great earthern jar in the dark inner room. But before night she found she must go for water, and as the stream was a half-mile from the houses, she would be gone some time. So as she departed with a brightly-painted jar upon her head she charged her husband strictly on no account to enter the inner room during her absence.

When she was gone Ees-tee-ah Muts began to ponder what she had said, and he feared that all was not well. He went to the inner room and looked round, and when he found the baby cooking he was grieved, as any good husband would be, for then he knew that his wife was a witch. But when his wife returned with the water he said not a word, keeping only a sharp look-out to see what would come.

Very early that night Ees-tee-ah Muts pretended to go to sleep, but he was really very wide awake. His wife was very quiet, but he could feel that she was watching him. Presently a cat came sneaking into the room, and whispered to the witch-wife:—

"Why do you not come to the meeting, for we await you?"

"Wait me yet a little," she whispered, "until the man is sound asleep."

The cat crept away, and Ees-tee-ah Muts kept very still. By-and-bye an owl came in and bade the woman hurry. And, at last, thinking her husband asleep, the witch-wife arose noiselessly and went out.

As soon as she was gone, Ees-tee-ah Muts got up and followed her at a distance, for it was the night of a full moon, and the path was silvered by its light.

The witch-wife walked a long way until she came to the foot of the Black Mesa, where was a great dark hole, with a rainbow in its mouth. As she passed under the rainbow she turned herself into a cat and disappeared within the cave. Ees-tee-ah Muts crept softly up and peered in. He saw a great fire-lit room full of witches in the shapes of ravens and vultures, wolves, and other animals of ill-omen. They were gathered about their feast and were enjoying themselves, eating, dancing, and singing, and planning evil to mankind.

For a long time Ees-tee-ah Muts watched them, but at last one caught sight of his face peering in at the hole.

"Bring him in!" shouted the chief witch, and many of them rushed out and surrounded him and dragged him into the cave.

"Now," said the chief witch, who was very angry, "we have caught you as a spy, and we ought to kill you. But if you will save your life, and be one of us, go home and bring me the hearts of your mother and sister, and I will teach you all our ways, so that you shall be a mighty wizard. Lose no time but go at once."

Ees-tee-ah Muts hurried home to Acoma and killed two sheep, for he knew, as every Indian knows, that it was useless to try to escape from the witches. Taking the hearts of the sheep, he quickly returned to the chief witch, to whom he gave them. But when the chief witch pricked the hearts with a sharp stick they swelled themselves out like a frog. Then she knew that she had been deceived, and was very angry; but, pretending not to care, she ordered Ees-tee-ah Muts to go home, which the frightened hunter was very glad to do.

But next morning, when Ees-tee-ah Muts awoke, he was not in his own home at all, but lying in a tiny shelf far up on a dizzy cliff. To jump was certain death, for it was a thousand feet to the ground, and climb he could not, for the smooth rock rose a thousand feet above his head. Then he knew that he had been bewitched, and that he must die.

He could hardly move without falling from the narrow shelf, and there he lay with bitter thoughts until the sun was high overhead. At last a young squirrel came running along the ledge, and, seeing him, ran back to his mother, crying:

"Here is a dead man lying on our ledge!"

"No, he is not dead," said the squirrel-mother, when she had looked; "but I think he is very hungry. Here, take this acorn-cup and carry him some cornmeal and water."

The young squirrel brought the acorn-cup full of wet cornmeal, but Ees-tee-ah Muts scorned it, he would not take it, for he thought

"Pah! What is so little when I am fainting for food?"

But the squirrel mother, knowing what was in his heart, said to him

"Not so. It looks to be little, but there will be more than enough. Eat and be strong."

Still doubting, Ees-tee-ah Muts took the cup and ate of the cornmeal until he could eat no longer, and yet the acorn cup was not empty. Then the young squirrel took the cup and brought it full of water, and, though he was very thirsty, he could not drain it.

"Now, friend," said the squirrel mother, when he was refreshed by his meal, "you cannot get down from here, where the witches put you; but wait, for I am the one that will help you."

She went to her store-room and brought out a pine cone, which she dropped over the great cliff. Ees-tee-ah Muts lay on the narrow ledge as patiently as he could, sleeping sometimes and sometimes thinking of his strange plight. Next morning he could see a stout young pine-tree growing at the bottom of the cliff, where he was very sure there had been no tree at all the day before. Before night it was a large tree, and the second morning it was twice as tall. The young squirrel brought him meal and water in the acorn cup twice a day, and now he began to be confident that he would escape with the help of the squirrel-mother.

By the evening of the fourth day the magic pine towered far above his head, and it was so close to the cliff that he could touch it from his shelf

"Now, friend man," said the squirrel-mother, "follow me," and she leaped lightly into the tree. Ees-tee-ah Muts seized a branch and swung over into the tree, and letting himself down from bough to bough, at last reached the ground in safety. The squirrel mother came with him to the ground, and he thanked her for her kindness.

"But now I must go back to my home," she said. "Take these seeds of the pine-tree, and these nuts which I have brought for you, and be very careful of them. When you get home give your wife the pine seeds, but you must eat the nuts. So now, good-bye;" and off she went up the tree, and disappeared from his sight.

When Ees-tee-ah Muts had come to his home he was very much surprised. For the four days of his absence had really been four years, and the people looked strange. All had given him up for dead, and his witch-wife had married another man, but still lived in the same house which was hers. When Ees-tee-ah Muts entered she seemed very glad to see him, and pretended to know nothing of what had befallen him. He said nothing about it, but talked pleasantly while he munched the nuts, giving her the pine-seeds to eat. Her new husband made a bed for Ees-tee-ah Muts, and in the morning, very early, the two men went away together on a hunt.

That afternoon the mother of the witch-wife went to visit her daughter, but when she came near the house she stopped in terror, for up through the roof grew a great pine-tree, whose arms came out at doors and windows. That was the end of the witch-wife, for the magic seed had sprouted inside her, and she was turned into a great sad pine that swayed above her home, and moaned and sobbed forever, as all her pine children do to this day.

MR. CHIPPS (looking up from the paper): "The doctors have discovered another new disease."

MRS. CHIPPS: "Well, I wish they would stop looking for new diseases long enough to find a cure for my old rheumatism."

HUSBAND: "My dear, I read here that a man was fired at by a burglar last night, and his life was saved by the bullet striking against a button of his clothes."

Wife (snappishly): "Well, what of that, pray?"

Husband: "Oh, nothing; except that the button must have been on."

A TEACHER was conversing with his pupils about the five senses and their importance.

Teacher: "Suppose we had to be deprived of one of our five senses, and we were at liberty to choose, which of them could you most readily dispense with, Fitz Lehmann?"

Fitz (recently chastised for mischievous behaviour, and rubbing the part affected): "Feelin'."

A NEW magazine for the fair sex published in North Carolina introduces itself to the public in this coy fashion:—"A callow birdling nestles among you, its unfledged wings eager for flight, eager to penetrate the mysteries of the bright far-off canopy of blue and revel amid the dreamed-of beauties of the wide, wide world. Whispering faith and hope in each vocal breath, what shall be its fate? Shall it mingle its joyous carol with the spicy odours of its native groves? Or will you cast it out to seek refuge in some alien woodland, there to warble out its early death-lay, unloved, forgotten, and alone?"

ABOUT PEARSON'S WEEKLY.

No doubt this *Extra Christmas Number* will be purchased by many who are not regular readers of the weekly paper of which it is an offshoot.

To you, if you are one of these, it seems well to say a few words regarding the contents of this weekly journal which is written and edited by the same staff as is responsible for the paper you hold in your hand, and which therefore should not fail to secure your approbation if you are pleased with the matter contained in its *Extra Number*.

To begin with, it may interest you to learn that *Pearson's Weekly* has attained great success more rapidly than any paper which has ever been published. On its second birthday it contained a Chartered Accountant's certificate to the effect that the weekly circulation was 305,000 copies. Such rapidity of growth is absolutely unexampled, and seems to show that the paper must have something about it which makes it specially worth reading.

In the ordinary way *Pearson's Weekly* is on sale first thing every Saturday morning. A copy is an insurance policy against fatal railway accident for £1,000 (*P. W.* was the first paper to insure its readers for anything like so large a sum, against death from general accident under certain conditions for £25, and against injury arising from general accident for from £5 to £10, depending upon the seriousness of the injury.

Cyclists and football players are included in this latter system of insurance, and there is in addition a special Insurance Policy in force for members of each of these large bodies, by which they are secured against death, while in pursuit of their favourite pastime, for the sum of £100.

The cerise wrapper of *Pearson's Weekly* encloses the largest paper of its kind published, and one which, while depending for its circulation upon its intrinsic literary merit, has at the same time always made a point of offering liberal prizes to readers.

Every number contains at least one long story and a large number of short ones, articles and poems.

Perhaps the most distinguishing of its special features is a page called HOME NOTES which provides housekeepers with thoroughly practical and useful hints on cookery and general household management. Questions of general interest are answered in this page, while private replies are sent by post to all correspondents who write on household matters to the lady who conducts it.

QUESTIONS WORTH ANSWERING is a page in which are published every week queries covering almost every branch of human knowledge. The greater part of the page is occupied by replies to questions that have appeared in previous issues, and these are paid for at the rate of two guineas a column, while half-a-crown is paid for every question accepted.

Another page is divided between two features, one called ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN, which gives personal particulars and anecdotes about the most notable people of the day, and the other called SOMETHING NEW AND STRANGE, which gives brief popular accounts of the latest discoveries and inventions, ranging from the most scientific appliances to the most simple household utensils.

A series of articles which has retained its popularity for more than twelve months is entitled WORKERS AND THEIR WORK. Every week is published under this general heading an interview with some interesting personage.

Pearson's Weekly includes a serial story. The one which is running now deals in most forcible and realistic fashion with the bad old convict system of Australia. It will be followed by a thrilling story of Modern Anarchy, and later on will appear a story from the pen of Mr. H. Rider Haggard.

A recently introduced feature is entitled PECULIAR PARS IN THE PAPERS. Here the oddest mistakes and the quaintest advertisements from the Press of the world are are reproduced and commented upon. Readers are invited to send along Peculiar Pars, and half-a-crown is paid for every one that is accepted and published.

A feature of *Pearson's Weekly* is the MISSING WORD COMPETITION. Its popularity may perhaps be best gauged by the number of other papers that have imitated it. Winners in this competition have received as much as £20 for an initial outlay of one shilling.

To give the paper a trial will cost you but one penny. This large sum cannot in any event be wasted, for it must at all events secure the largest pennyworth of miscellaneous reading matter in the world; while it may introduce you to a paper which will be welcomed weekly in future.

IN a manse in Fife the conversation of a large party one evening turned on a volume of sermons which had just been published with considerable success, and was supposed to have brought a round sum into the hands of the author. When the minister's wife heard of what had been made by the volume, her imagination was excited, and, turning to her husband, who sat a little aside, she said:

"My dear, I see naething to hinder you to print a few of your sermons, too."

"They were a' printed lang syne," said the candid minister in his wife's ear.

ASA FLEETWOOD'S STORY.

"WHAT was the queerest thing I ever seed?"

We five were lounging in the little cabin after a long day's tramp over the Canadian hills; the dogs lay sprawled on the rough boards, with weary limbs toasting before the fire; and the smoke from our pipes was poisoning the sweet September air with every degree of smouldering long cut, fine cut, and mixture.

The guns had been cleaned and polished and put away; the cartridges were loaded for the morrow; and we four delegates from civilization had been whiling away the last drowsy hour before rolling up in our blankets by the recital of adventures real or imagined—such tales as hunters love to tell and other hunters love to listen to. Then the doctor, with a sly wink at the rest that signified something of interest, had called upon our guide, old grizzled Asa Fleetwood, for his contribution to the marvellous.

"I dunno if I kin give you anything that'll strike you, gentlemen, as worth the hearing on. I've seed some strange things out yere in this lonesomeness—yes, and been in 'em too; but I can't tell you of no sich things as you've been telling on—no deers killed with popguns" Asa's disrespectful name for our silver-trimmed revolvers—"nor no wild hosses ketched by salting of their tails"—and the old fellow grinned at his own joke—"but I kin tell you jest a plain, every-day story of something I seed onct, that I'll never forget—not to my last minute on this earth."

He paused, with a "by your leave," to fill his corn-cob from the nearest box, and tapping the "bright Virginia" into the bowl, looked round at the faces silhouetted against the fire, pulled a moment at the pipe to get it well alight, settled himself back into a more comfortable position, and began his story:

"About the time I first located in these parts, when deer and b'ar, and wolves and game was plenty, and everything a feller needs could be had for the taking on it, along over the trail one day, pack on back and a whole gun-shop of wepins stuck on all over him, kinder singing softly to hisself as he walks, up come a little chap what says to me: 'Howdy, stranger,' allows as how his name was Marlow—Jim Marlow—claps hisself down by my fire like as if he was coming to a party, and jests makes hisself to home.

"He weren't much to look at: jest an ornary, homely little cuss, but clear grit and a heart o' gold, as I found out arterwards. Well, I won't bother you with telling how it came about, but anyway, we become pardners, Jim Marlow and me, and worked our traps in cahoots, and took turns at the cooking and dish-washing. Oh, you needn't laugh, we washed 'em all right when we wasn't in too much on a hurry.

"Bimeby—maybe two weeks, maybe more—he lets on as how he has another pard in the East, a-following him on the trail; and if I ain't convenient—which I wasn't noways—he'd be glad to have him kinder join in and be one of us. And I allowed the woods was big enough for three, and anybody as Jim had tied to would go all right with Asa Fleetwood.

"And sure enough, afore the month was out, along he comes jest of a nightfall, a-leading of one hoss and a-riding of another: and when he sees our camp smoke, out he lets a great 'halloo' that sets the woods a-ringing, and when Jim hears that, up he jumps and tears away down the hill like mad; and this other, he off his hoss and runs to Jim; and sich a shaking of hands and clapping each other on the back I never did see in all my days!

"Well, presently along they come up the hill, and Jim allows as how I was Asa, and this other, he was Rube; and we onpacks his hoss and stows his kit comfortable-like, and inside of two days we might ha' been three brothers, Reuben Wethersbee, Jim Marlow, and me, so snug and smooth everything was a-running.

"And one day, along in the fall, and the leaves turning brown, and some on 'em red on the trees, and the squirrels a-lining up their winter nests with acorns and a-chirp-chirping all the day long, and the chick-partridges a-skurrying arter the old birds pretty nigh under your very feet—which I s'pose made him think of his own little chicks Rube says: 'Boys, this yere thing is gelorious, and I don't want nothing better than for to spend my days right out yere along o' you and in this yere clearing.'

"And we was agreeable, sure enough, and he goes on to say as how he'd a mind to build hisself a little home and slick everything up fine, and when he got her done, why he'd send away to the States for his wife and little ones. Well, sirs, that thing give me a kind of turn, for let alone the building of a house out thar in the woods, and a rough feller like me a sleeping anywhere but out o' doors like I'd been used to, I weren't much on a hand for women folks noways.

"But when I looks at Reuben, and sees his face all lit up and the tears a-shining in his eyes, I jest gives in right thar, and lets on as how this yere thing was downright mostly needful for to perfectify our little camp.

"And every spare minute arter that we was a-working on the little house and a-widening out the clearing. And sich a chopping down of trees, and sich a hauling of 'em yere and a lusting of 'em thar, you never hearn tell on. And bimeby she begins to look like a house; and Jim Marlow and Rube and me was a riding over to the settlement, twenty mile away, and a-swopping pelts and sich for doors and windys and pots and kettles and fixings; and a-toting 'em back over the hills, and a-bumping 'em agin the trees, and a-yanking 'em through the brush till it was a wonder we didn't smash the whole outfit.

"And all this while we was a-guessing, Jim and me, how he was a-going to let 'em know about it, away off thar in the States for, bar making a good black mark on a paper when we took up the land, we was no scholars, neither on us, nor had no book-larning, though I've picked up maybe a smattering since. And we knowed a whole wilderness of them little black crosses wouldn't tell her nothing of the little house, nor of Jim Marlow nor me, nor how to get whar we was, unless she was to take 'em for blaze marks on the trees.

"You see I was dreadful ignorant in them days. But Reuben, he was eddicated, and when the time comes, out he gets a bit of board by the firelight, and a piece of paper, and a thing he calls a envyloop, or some sich name, with a little pictur pasted in the corner, all handsome and convenient, and he falls to a-writing of his letter: and Jim and me, we helps with our idees quite promiskyous, and when at last he gets her done, and folded up, and sticks her in the envyloop, all hands takes a lick to wet the gum, and seal her up, so to say, the whole on us, for this yere invitation was our sentiments.

"Then we gives three cheers for the little house and for the little family a-coming out to live in it, jest for luck and good feeling, you know, and next morning Reuben rides away over the trail to ketch the Wednesday stage and post his letter.

"Well, about a month arterwards—and Rube a-riding in to the settlement every time the stage comes through, to get his answer—one night, back he comes a-whooping, and a-letting out halloos and hollerings for very joy: and when he comes in sight o' us, he waves a little white thing in the air; and then we see he'd got his letter.

"But we had a time a-reading on it, for it's a durn sight easier for to write a letter—what we said ourselves—than to read a letter—what other folks said! And Jim and me a-helping all we could, and a-looking at it wrong side up, and hind side afore—I knows better nowadays—and a-searching for crosses, which thar wasn't nary one in the whole letter, and all on us mostly skipping the long words; anyway, we made out the sense of it, and she was a-coming, she and the little ones, in the next stage to foller.

"Well, I don't s'pose you ever see sich fools as we was, a-trimming up that cabin in and out with spruce boughs, and a-nailing up shelves and women's fixings; and it was jest hammer, hammer, hammer, all the day long, and pretty much all the night, too, and then up and at it agin in the morning, till our fingers was that sore with missing the nail-heads and a-pounding of ourselves—and the cabin, that stuck full of nails, I don't believe you could ha' clapped a squirrel-skin up anywhars without you'd touch a dozen on 'em.

"And when the time comes nigh and the hours was getting shorter, Reuben was a-running out-doors to take a look, and a-running back in-doors to take a look, and a-changing this yere and a-moving that thar, and a-fidgetting about the whole place till Jim and me wus near druv wild.

"And the day afore they was to come, and Rube sorter standing all by hisself and a-thinking and a-thinking, all of a sudden he says, along o' nothing: 'Boys, I—I can't go down thar in the settlement and meet 'em first—afore all those folks—I—jest can't do it. Why, I about know I'd make a varmint of myself, a-hugging and a-kissing 'em, and like as not I'd go to crying and disgrace 'em—when I sets eyes on them babies!'

"And Jim and me, we sees his heart was in it, so Jim, as knowed 'em anyway, why he allowed he'd go down and meet 'em at the stage, and borry a waggon, and bring 'em out as far as the trail would let a waggon come. And Reuben and me was to walk over and meet 'em at the big divide, jest where the trail dips down into the ford and then falls a zig-zagging up the foot-hills. For you see when you gets atop of them hills, the trail was fair and straight for quite a piece, and we could see 'em coming a long ways off. And so we fixed it.

"And that night the snow came, and in the morning it was a-laying soft and white all over the trees and over the trail, and everything jest a-shining in the sun, sorter joyful-like. And Jim, he says as how we needn't be surprised to see him coming back a-sledding, and if thar was any jingle-bells in the place, why he would have 'em. And he rides away on the old roan hoss, a-leading of the bay, and both on 'em a-swish-swashing through the snow, and we a-dancing and a-shouting on the hill to keep him company as long as he could hear, jest like two children.

"Well, sirs, thar was more come with that snow than we first thought on; for along about two o'clock, jest arter we'd lit the first fire in the fireplace, and was a-standing out-o'-doors to see the smoke pour out the chimbley, we hears a howl—and then another—long and shrill and dismal-like. And Rube turns white as the snow thar, and jest says one word: 'Wolves!'

"Now a wolf ain't no great critter for a man what's well and strong, and got a gun, and, maybe, could climb a tree, to be afeard on, but when he's got a wife and babies coming through the woods to meet him—and they not knowing the ways of wild things anyway—and Jim with nothing but a little popping six-shooter for to defend hisself on—then I tell you wolves is different! And every time they yelled away off thar atwixt us and the settlement, some way our hearts jest clim' right up in our throats, and stuck thar, and we a-panting.

"Gentlemen, it takes a tidy while to tell about it, but it wasn't two shakes afore we was in the little cabin, and we grabs a gun yere and a hatchet thar, and I don't know what all, and then away we goes a-tearing down the trail, teeth shet hard, and narves and muscles braced for a long race over the white snow. And all the while that wild howling a-getting nearer, and a-getting nearer, and the cold chills a-creeping up my back and a-shooting down agin' and the agony in Reuben's face a deepening, ever' time we hears that distant yell

"The good Lord only knows how we got thar, so scared and tremblyous and all onfit for running as we was, but anyway we reached the last hill over the ford, and jest as we was a-going to plunge down the trail, Rube stops short and throws up one hand, and says with his lips as plain as though he'd said it with his voice—for we had no breath left for talking with—'Listen!' And sure enough, away off that we hears, faint and distant-like, a little 'crack!'—and then another and another—six of 'em—about as loud as snapping of a little twig. But we knowed what it meant: it was Jim's six-shooter a-speaking bravely for the wife and little ones, a-coming on the trail.

"Then down we goes over the hill, and splash, splash, into the ford, up to our knees, up to our waists, up to our arm-pits in the icy water—but a-holding our arms up high and a-keeping our guns and amynition dry for to do death on them yelping fiends! And when we gets atop of the hill, we hears 'em coming 'round the bend, the little gun a going zip-bang—agin—six times; and then a little space for him to load, and then onct more, six times. And all the while the wolves a-keeping up that yell, howl, and yell agin—that turned our blood to ice; and we a-going on, a-staggering, and a-stumbling, and a-straining of our ears to listen.

"And jest then they comes in sight, a good mile away, but seeming almost nigh enough to touch 'em in the cold, clear air—the hosses all alash, the low sled a-bumping on the fallen logs, Jim a-standing up and laying on the whip—and every little while a-throwing back his arm—and then would come a little puff of smoke—and then we'd hear the piff-bang a-floating on the air; and in the sled, all of a huddle on the floor, a tumbling, bouncing heap we knowed was Rube's wife and babies.

"And Reuben gives a awful groan, and stops, and throws up both arms, dead-beat and all unnarved, and looks at me appealing-like, but I could only shake my head, and drag him on. I knowed they'd never make it to get in shot of us the way it looked, afore the wolves would be upon 'em; for they was gaining now and coming up with every stride—and we so helpless.

"And jest then Jim fires two shots, snap-bang, at a wolf as was a-getting up abreast of him, but only twice, and part of the pack stops and pitches on this dying one; but the rest keeps on, and Jim flings something bright and sunny in the sun squat in the face of one a-coming up on t'other side; and then we see his last shot was gone, and he'd throwed away his wepin for every pound counted. Then presently, out goes the buffalo skin—and then something else; and each time the pack stops, and some on 'em rolls over and goes heels up in the sudden check, and back agin and takes a sniff, and when they finds their bite don't draw the blood, then hark back arter the chase, and a-getting nearer, nearer all the while.

"And now we kin see Jim's white face, kin hear him shouting to the hosses, and shouting at the wolves a-gaining grim and deadly—and Rube kneels down and throws up the barrel of his rifle—but drops it quick agin and gives a moan; he darsen't fire for fear he'd hit something else, dearer a thousand times than his own body.

"And then it was, gentlemen, I seed the strangest, queerest thing I ever see in all my living days: for Jim, he sees he'd never win the race with all on 'em, and he jest up and stands on the seat, sharp and clear against the white sky, gives the hosses a last clip with the lash, kinder kisses his hand to the sunshine he never was to see agin, whips off his hat, and waves it—jest like the—twice or maybe thrice around his head, gives us a ringing cheer across the snow, and turns and vaults back among those yelping, shrieking fiends. They climb on him and tear at him; he fights 'em with his bare hands, strikes 'em with his clinched fists, and jest then, while we was glaring at it all, so helpless and so hopeless, along comes the panting horses, and kinder slows up.

"Some way or other I bundle Reuben in and he grabs the reins, flings me his gun and cartridge-belt, and then away, away with the wife and babies for the home on the distant hills, while I goes rushing back, shouting, screaming; but too late! I never seed dear, old, trusty, homely Jim agin; never heard his bonny voice arter that one cheer; jest seed a shapeless something on the bloody snow, heard them fiends a-crunch-crunching that I hear again in dreams until this day. Then all the snow and trees and hills and sky turns kinder black afore my eyes—I gives one yell to Jim that I'm a-coming—and knows no more until I finds myself, knife in one hand and hatchet in the other, a-hacking and a-stabbing and a-chopping those hounds of Satan—shouting, drenched with blood—theirs, and his, and mine.

"But I'm alive to tell on it. And—Jim—don't mind an old fool's tears—I—I've seed the winter snows fall soft and white this twenty year upon the little pile of stones that marks the spot; but Jim don't need no monument, for in our hearts he's living still—and loved—and unforgotten."

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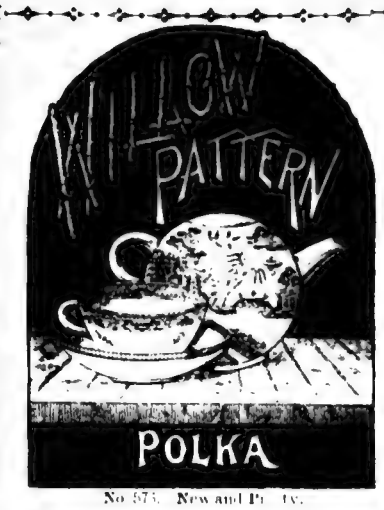

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7. Salut du Matin (*Schubert*)
8. In Diesen Heil'Gen Hallen (*Mozart*)
9. Bella Siccome un Angelo (*Donizetti*)
10. The Birdcatcher (*Mozart*)

No.
11. Serenade from "Favorita" (*Donizetti*)
12. Notte E Giorna (*Mozart*)
13. Silver Rhine (*Hutchinson*)
14. Heart of my Heart (*Hutchinson*)
15. Lighthouse Light (*Hutchinson*)

No.
16. In Life and in Death (*Barnby*)
17. Side by side (*Hutchinson*)
18. No hand but Thine (*Barri*)
19. Mine Again (*Hutchinson*)
20. Road to the Fair (*Hutchinson*)
21. Under the Stars (*Hutchinson*)
22. Never, ah! Nevermore "

No.
23. Two Chords (*Hutchinson*)
24. Pierrot (*Hutchinson*)
25. Say that I Love (*Hutchinson*)
26. When the Children (*Hutchinson*)
27. Last Milestone (*Pontet*)
29. Bridge of Sighs (*Offenbach*)

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THE CURIOUS CASE OF CHARLES CASALLIS.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISAPPEARANCE.

This is the true story of the Casallis Mystery, which made some stir in the world about a quarter of a century ago. It was something more than a nine days' wonder, and both the London and the provincial press gave it due prominence, and kept the public interest in the details alive; but the solution of the affair is known only to myself and a few others closely concerned in it, and has never before been made public.

It was in the year 1865 that I, George Sinclair, left Eton, and, after a six months' scamper on the Continent, entered my name on the books of Balliol College, Oxford. I had a liberal allowance from my father, and, when of age, was destined to inherit a comfortable fortune, left me by my maternal grandmother, whose pet I had been; so I soon formed a circle of friends, men whose position, financially speaking, was on a par with my own and was by them speedily initiated into the various modes of killing time—boating, riding, hunting, etc., which to the average undergraduate are of far more importance than "cramming for smalls," or "reading for little-go."

Among the members of this pleasure seeking set, I need only describe one individual, the hero of the present narrative. Charles Casallis, when I first made his acquaintance, was as striking in appearance, as he was original in character. Somewhat above the medium height, with drooping moustache, silky beard, and hair worn much longer than was the fashion, he looked something like a Bohemian of the Quartier Latin, but that his clothes and linen were faultless, and that he was always well gloved and shod. His complexion was swarthy, his eyes deep-set and piercing, and his expression at times almost saturnine; yet he was a popular man, always ready to do a good turn for a friend or an acquaintance, giving capital "wines" in his well-furnished rooms, riding the best nags that old Hunt's stables could supply, and losing or winning at whist, billiards, or even euchre, with the best grace imaginable.

But there were two peculiarities about Casallis which served to distinguish him from his fellow collegians, and the first of these was that he seemed to stand alone in the world. No one ever heard him mention the name of a relation, or allude to friends beyond the circle of the university. It was generally understood that he was an orphan; and rumour asserted that he was the ward—and would be the heir—of an uncle, whose enormous fortune had been acquired in the unsavoury business of soap-boiling. But this was mere gossip. When other men were chatting of their sisters, or of their ancestral homes, Casallis was silent. Some attempts had been made to "draw" him on the subject, but they were met with such hauteur, and such undeniable frigidity, that they were not renewed.

"The fact is," said Jones, of Jesus, one evening, when Casallis—in his absence, of course—was being discussed, "Charlie wants to keep us in the dark about his people—if he's got any, that is; and I take it to be deuced bad form to push any inquiries of that sort against a fellow's will. Charlie's a rattling good sort——"

"By Jove, yes," acquiesced the men present in a chorus.

"And it seems to me," continued the speaker, "that where he comes from, or who his father and mother were, don't matter a rap to anybody but himself."

Jones—familiarly known as "Jumping Jones," owing to his powers in athletics—only expressed the general opinion of Balliol. Casallis *was* a "good sort," and that sufficed.

But the second peculiarity of his character caused more comment, and was more openly discussed. At the period of which I am speaking table-turning, spirit-rapping, and similar mysteries were popular "society" crazes; while at Oxford, what were termed the occult sciences were for the time occupying the minds and attention of a large proportion of the reading students. It was merely a passing hobby; but men, met for those smokes and discussions so dear to the collegiate mind, argued hotly, if not reasonably, on the possibilities of Paracelsus having been a genius; on the pros and cons of mesmerism (hypnotism was then unknown), and on the probabilities of metempsychosis being a realism. Casallis was one of the first to be bitten with the craze, and, in college phraseology, he had "caught it badly." In season and out of season he argued, quoted, criticised, and discussed all the bearings of the many theories brought forward, and was known as one of the most "advanced" students of the cult. Men smiled at the daring flights of his imagination, and at the dexterity with which he found arguments to back up the wildest ideas; and not a few openly asserted that on this point Charles Casallis, who on all others was remarkably level-headed, was a bit cracked.

These introductory remarks—somewhat tedious as they may appear—are necessary forerunners of what is to follow, and serve to bring us up to the month of April in the year 1866. On the evening of the sixteenth of that month, eight Balliol men, including myself, were congregated in Casallis's rooms, he making a ninth. The conversation turned, as usual, on spiritualism, the transmigration of souls, the influence of mind over matter, volition of thought, and other kindred topics, over which we argued eagerly, with many words, and with not much sense, I fear. I noticed that Casallis, who generally took a prominent part in such discussions, was that night quieter than us.

"You seem a bit off colour to-night, old fellow," I remarked jokingly.

"The fact is," said Jones, who was present, "our friend Charlie is meditating a flight through the azure to China, where he has an important appointment with the present successor of Asmodeus I. How many seconds does your soaring soul take to get from here to Canton, Charlie?"

"Oh come, that's all rot," put in Melville, a "reading" man, in his third term. "Everybody knows you're a cynic, Jones; and the chaff of an agnostic is not argument. I'm inclined to think there's a good deal more in the theory of volition—not only mental, but bodily—than any one quite understands. We read how in the fifteenth century——"

"By jove," broke in the irrepressible Jones, "that would be a handy thing when that blessed old proctor and his bull-dogs are prowling about, wouldn't it? Fancy, just heaving a deep sigh, and wishing a wish, and hey! presto! you would be wafted off and deposited snugly in your rooms, without having to dodge down half a dozen back streets and spend valuable coin of the realm on bribing Cerberus."

"There certainly *is* something in it," said Casallis quietly, when the laughter which followed Jones's absurd remarks had ceased. "Melville is right, and I think I have made a discovery which shows that the theories of the past can be realised in some very sober facts of the present."

"You have?" I enquired, excitedly. "What is it, Charlie? Let's have it."

"Well," replied Casallis, hesitatingly, "I am willing to try a little experiment; it *may* fail, but I don't think it will. Just excuse me if I step into the other room for a minute. George, old man, you'll find some more Bass in the bottom of the cupboard," and so saying Casallis left the room.

Now I must explain that the two rooms occupied by Casallis communicated with an inner door, but both had doors leading into the passage, which in its turn led to the stairs. Casallis passed through the door of communication, which he closed behind him, and for the next two or three minutes I was occupied in carrying the bottles of Bass from the cupboard to the table, where each man uncorked and poured out for himself.

"I wonder what Charlie's little experiment is," said one of the company, a freshman, who had the reputation of having thoroughly investigated the Davenport business; "anything in the way of a dark cabinet, or a tambourine flying across the room I wonder?"

"Charlie wouldn't waste his time over such foolery as that," said Melville, indignantly; "I fancy he has hit on the thought writing, which Mags is said to have perfected about——"

"Hullo! what was that?" exclaimed two or three voices simultaneously.

On comparing notes subsequently, no one could say exactly what the "that" referred to was. Certainly it was something that had strangely excited, if not alarmed us. It seemed, if I may use the expression, like a colossal sigh, or a subdued wail, which pervaded the room for a moment only, and left us mute and wondering. The evening had been fine, but the winds had risen suddenly, and the windows rattled noisily with the vibrations of the coming storm. Every man present, including Jones the unbeliever, experienced an uncanny, eerie feeling which not one of us could have described. Casallis had been absent from the room for some seven or eight minutes.

"Let's ask Charlie if he heard it," said Melville, breaking the silence at length. "Go and fetch him out, Sinclair."

I rose from my seat, and opening the communicating door, entered Charles's bedroom.

"Did you hear anything strange, just this minute, old fellow?" I enquired.

There was no answer.

The gas was burning brightly over the dressing-table, in the glass of which I could see myself reflected, and, over my shoulder, the table I had just left, with the men seated round it.

I glanced quickly round the room, without seeing Casallis. Even then I hardly realised the situation, and spoke again—

"Where are you, Charlie?"

There was no reply. I advanced further into the room, looking anxiously into each corner. Then, with a sudden fear, which was as unreasonable as it was inexplicable, I hurriedly returned to the other room.

"I say, you fellows," I stammered, "Casallis isn't there!"

"I thought you were going to say you'd seen a ghost," said Jones, with a laugh. He had recovered his nerve—if indeed he had lost it—and was his own sceptical self once more. "Here, let me have a look," and he entered the bedroom, followed by most of the party.

But neither Jones, nor I, nor the others could find Casallis.

"Of course he's gone out for something or other," suggested Melville, and he approached the door leading into the passage.

The door was locked, and the key *was in the lock on the inside.*

The thing was growing serious. We examined the window, which was securely latched. We looked in the only cupboard in the room; we peered under the bed; and one eager searcher even pulled open the drawers of the wardrobe, causing a laugh at his idea that Casallis could *shut* a drawer after hiding in it, even if he could have crowded into such close quarters.

There was a small fire-place in the room. But the register of the grate was closed, and when we raised it—with some difficulty—such an avalanche of soot fell down as entirely precluded the idea of any human being having left the apartment in that direction.

"Well, this *is* a go!" ejaculated Jones.

"I say, look here," said one of the other men, who was staring at the bed. We followed the direction of his gaze; and all noticed an impression on the counterpane, as if someone had thrown himself down to rest. There was a "dent" in the covered pillow where a head would have lain; others where the elbow and hips would be pressed: but although these were distinctly visible, there were no traces of the body which must have caused them.

Gradually the mystery of the disappearance broke upon us. I hope I have made the circumstances clear. Let me recapitulate them briefly. Casallis had entered his bedroom, closing the door (communicating with the room in which we had been sitting) behind him. A few minutes later—certainly not more than seven or eight—I had entered the bedroom by the same door, and found Casallis missing. The other door, by which he *might* have left the room was locked, with the key in the lock on the inner side. The window—which was two storeys from the ground—was securely fastened; and the chimney—the only other outlet from the apartment—was so choked with soot as to prove convincingly that no one could have left the room that way.

We talked the matter over, calmly—for there was no disposition to dispute or argue about such plain facts as those before us. None of us could offer even the wildest theory to account for the disappearance of Charles Casallis. I volunteered to report the matter to the authorities, and did so at once, while the others remained in the room. In less than half an hour the heads of the College and a police inspector were examining the room, without throwing any light on the affair; and, an hour later, the apartments recently occupied by Charles Casallis were empty, with the outer doors carefully watched by a vigilant member of the force.

Such are the details, concisely and, I hope, clearly given, of what was known as the Casallis case. Charles Casallis had disappeared as completely as if he had melted into thin air, and no one could explain, or even suggest, how that disappearance had been effected. Naturally the circumstance gave additional zest to the spiritualistic *seances* and the abstruse discussions of those who were going in for "researches" into occult science. That Casallis had been "dissolved," "etherialised," prior to his being "resuscitated" in another land, and under a different form, was one of the many arguments of the more advanced students, arguments which were laughed to scorn by the common-sense majority.

Again the question arose, who was Charles Casallis? His entry at the College had been accompanied by references to and by actual communications with a firm of Bankers at Berlin, and he had given, it transpired, the address of his guardian as "Dr. Killson, 28th Street, New York." Letters were written to both these addresses. That sent to New York was returned endorsed "not known," and inquiries through the New York police failed to trace any "Dr. Killson" in 28th Street, or anywhere else in the city. That to the Berlin bankers elicited a prompt reply, stating that some six months prior to the date at which Charles Casallis went to Oxford, he had lodged in their hands a sum equal to £240 sterling, all of which had been drawn out about a year later.

And then it leaked out that during his eighteen month's residence at Oxford, Casallis had run up even more than the usual amount of debts incurred by the average undergraduate. He had actually remained at Oxford during the vacation, thereby gaining for himself the reputation of a reading man, which had certainly not impaired his credit, but beyond his buttery bills, and other indispensable ready-money matters, he had paid for nothing, and it was a surprise—even to those well acquainted with his free-handed way of living—to learn that he was "in" the books of Oxford tradesmen to the tune of something like fourteen hundred pounds, nearly four hundred of which was for jewellery, ornaments, and little expensive trifles, which, however, were all of the nature of "portable property," as Mr. Wemmick would have said. Whether these trinkets had been given away, lost, or "hypothecated," no one could say; certain it is that not a tithe of them remained when his rooms were ransacked; the few possessions left behind barely sufficing to pay the preferential claims on the "estate" of the late occupant.

Of course the Casallis case created intense excitement, not only in university circles, but far beyond those limits. But in the course of time—to be measured by weeks—a new sensation occupied the public mind. Casallis, if not forgotten, ceased to be talked about; and nearly twenty years rolled away ere I chanced on the solution of the mystery, though from time to time other circumstances occurred which kept it fresh in my memory.

CHAPTER II.

On a certain September morning, two years after the disappearance of Charles Casallis, a well-known Oxford jeweller was opening his morning's correspondence. Among the letters was one which considerably surprised him. It was written on hand-woven paper, in a curiously crabbed hand, and ran as follows:—

"Sir,—Enclosed is a cheque in payment of the account due to you by the late Charles Casallis, of Oxford. Yours, etc.,

SAHAB RAJ."

A very curt, business-like communication. And there was the cheque, too, drawn on a London banker for a round sum which was within a pound or two of the account which stood in the jeweller's ledger at the debit of C. Casallis—an account which the worthy tradesman had long ago written off as "bad." While he was still examining the letter and the cheque, a neighbour—whose hosier's shop is among those patronised by the most extravagant undergrads—entered the jeweller's private room and exclaimed:—

"Here's a curious thing: I've got a cheque for Casallis' account—you remember Casallis? The man who disappeared, you know?"

On comparing notes it was found that the handwriting of both letters and cheques was identical, and the amount of that forwarded to the hosier, was every near to that which Casallis owed the man; though, like the other, it was drawn for pounds only—no shillings or pence.

In the course of the day it transpired that every one of the creditors of Charles Casallis had received similar remittances. There was neither address nor date to the letters which enclosed the cheques. The envelopes bore the London post-mark, and appeared to have been posted simultaneously at the General Office in St. Martin's-le-Grand so said an Oxford postal official who examined them. Several of the recipients, unable to believe in their good fortune, declared that the whole thing was a hoax; but, like their more believing fellows they paid the cheques into their respective banking accounts, and in forty-eight hours found that the oblong slips of grey paper had been duly honoured. Of course, enquiries were made at the bank on which they were drawn, but the information obtained was most meagre. On a certain day a gentleman who "spoke like a foreigner" and who was "almost as dark complexioned as an Indian," had called at the bank in question, had deposited so many hundred pounds, principally in gold, had signed his name "Sahah Raj" in the record book kept for the purpose, had received a cheque-book, and had gone away. He had never been seen at the bank again, and the cheques drawn on the account, presented and honoured, left only a few pounds of the amount paid in.

This was the first of the events to which reference was made at the close of the last chapter, as serving from time to time to recall the disappearance of Casallis. The second occurred nearly twelve months later. Oxford men are not much given to superstition, in fact they are rather agnostics as regards ghosts, illusions, and other similar mysteries. But the rooms occupied by Casallis had acquired an unenviable reputation; no one stayed in them for long at a time. Sooner or later, generally a few months after the new tenant had taken possession, a mysterious "murmur" pervaded the rooms; and, with the history of Casallis still in his memory, the tenant lost no time in shifting his quarters. Thus it happened that some nine months after the tradesmen of Oxford had rejoiced over the unexpected payment of their accounts, Casallis's rooms, as they were still called, having remained untenanted for a time, were taken possession of by a young Irishman, whose stock of good humour and native *bonhomie* was only equalled by the poverty of his purse and the recklessness of his expenditure. Of course Patrick Aylward gave a "wine" to celebrate his taking possession, and a more jovial, careless lot than those who collected round his mahogany it would have been difficult to find in the College.

There was a moment's pause in the fun, as the men, having laughed themselves nearly out of breath at one of Pat's droll stories, leant back in their chairs and refilled their pipes and lit fresh cigars; and during the pause the "murmur"—I can call it by no other name—was distinctly heard. One or two of those present turned pale. The host alone appeared unmoved, remarking, coolly,

"Sure it's a storm we'll be havin' to-night, boys."

Nobody answered the remark, and Aylward went on,

"It's like my own room at Ballycoghane, so it is; with a convanient window that's better than a barometer any day—or night either."

"Window? What do you mean, Pat?" inquired one or two simultaneously.

"To be sure—window, man. Didn't ye hear it this minute? See here," and the speaker rose, and drew up the blind. "It's half the window—the top half, ye know—that isn't quite close. When the storm's rising, just the first swish of it makes the frame tremble like; see here now."

As he concluded, Aylward pressed the end of his briar-root gently against the window frame, so as to slightly admit the wind, which was every minute becoming more gusty; and the "mysterious murmur," which had been so often discussed, and which—thanks to Casallis' associations—we regarded as something uncanny, was again produced, this time in a very matter-of-fact manner.

In this way one of the curious accompaniments of Casallis' disappearance was explained; and those who had regarded the "murmur" as somehow connected with the "vanishing," were inclined to believe that the latter might be explained in an equally simple manner; only none of them could hit on the explanation.

Time passed on. I had graduated in honours. There were several letters tacked on to the end of the name George Sinclair, who was becoming known in the world of science. I married; my children grew up round me, and at the age of forty I was beginning to look forward to the time when I might give up work and retire on my laurels. Unfortunately, in my desire to hasten that time, I overworked myself, and my doctor insisted on a year's absolute rest. I had long desired to travel somewhat farther afield than the beaten tracks of Continental tourists, and as my wife would not leave her bairns, I started alone for a six months' ramble through our Indian Empire.

For the purposes of this story it is unnecessary to describe my wanderings. Suffice it to say that some five months after leaving England, I found myself at Bombay, having done a good bit of hill travelling, and greatly improved my health.

It was a glorious evening, and I was seated on the verandah of my hotel, enjoying a cheroot and a glass of iced pawnee. For some time I was the only occupant of the verandah, but just as I was starting my second cheroot, a man came through the matting blinds and took a chair a few feet from mine. Something about the contour of his head attracted my attention, and as he struck a match to light his cigar, the flame fell full on his features. It was Charles Casallis.

I was certain of it. Yet for the moment the discovery almost took away my breath, as the scene in the old Oxford rooms, a score of years ago, came back vividly to my recollection. For a minute or two I was silent. Then I rose from my chair, and placing my hand quietly on the man's shoulder, I said:

"Charlie, old fellow, how are you?"

The familiar appellation, the friendly phraseology, not only startled him, but as he subsequently admitted threw him off his guard. He rose hurriedly, peered into my face in the fast gathering gloom, and then in faltering accents exclaimed:

"George Sinclair, by Heaven!"

And then we grasped each other's hands, and neither of us spoke for awhile. Shall I candidly confess that I was glad to find that the hand which rested in mine was really solid flesh and bone? Of course there are no such things as ghosts; but for one brief moment I half expected that my eager grasp would close on nothing but air, and that the phantom figure of my old friend would vanish from my gaze. When we had overcome our first surprise we drifted gradually into conversation. I was the first to tell how I had progressed in the battle of life; and, as confidence begets confidence, I in turn learned how it fared with Casallis. The story he told me is too long to be repeated in his own words. The pink day was breaking over the distant hills ere it was concluded, and we had exchanged the chilly atmosphere of the verandah for the comfort of my own sitting-room; but, briefly, this is what Casallis told me:

The son of a subordinate official in the service of John Company, Charles Casallis had no recollection of his mother—a native woman—who had died while he was an infant. At the age of eighteen, having received a fair education, his father decided to send him to an English university, and lodged a few hundred pounds with a European banker, trusting that Charlie would make that sum last for a year or two. Led astray by the extravagant habits of richer companions, Charlie found that he had come down to his last fifty pounds precisely at the time when news reached him of his father having become a defaulter, and gone "up country" with more of John Company's money than legitimately belonged to him. Evidently there was nothing further to be obtained from the paternal purse. The New York doctor, who had assisted Casallis *père* in his speculations, had also found it convenient to "go away and leave no address;" so, after mature consideration, Casallis *fils* decided to do likewise. He had ever been fond of dramatic situations, and startling *dénouements*, and determined that his exit from Oxford should be a masterly retreat, with all the "honours of war," as far as success and plunder were concerned. How well that determination was carried out has already been told.

"But all your creditors were paid, a couple of years after you went away," I remarked, as Charlie ended the narration of his earlier history. "How was that managed?"

"Easily enough, my dear fellow," was the reply, with something of the old lightness of tone. "I came straight over here from Oxford, and assumed the name of my mother's brother, a man who was highly respected in native circles. My knowledge of Europe—England especially—and a natural aptitude for business served me in good turn. My uncle took me into his house; my advancement was rapid; he had no children; and when he died eighteen months after my arrival in India, I found myself at the head of a business which brought in many thousands a year. The rest was easy enough. I had only to give minute instructions to one of our agents in Europe. Careless as I had seemed to be at Oxford I had kept account of all my liabilities, and knew to a pound or two how much I owed. That I chose to pay certain debts at Oxford in an anonymous and unusual fashion was nothing to men who are accustomed to execute all sorts of confidential missions without asking any questions. An agent was sent over from Marseilles to London; the money deposited; the cheques posted; and he was back again in France twenty-four hours after he left it."

"But look here, Casallis," I exclaimed as the speaker paused; "how did you get out of the room?"

"Ah, that was a masterpiece," said Casallis, with a little laugh, "still as so many years have passed, I don't mind telling you how it was done."

As he spoke Casallis took a sheet of notepaper from the table, and sketched on it the following diagram.

[See notice on page 8, where a Prize of £10 is offered for the nearest solution of the mystery.]

MY MEERSCHAUM PIPE.

Let others puff upon cigars made from the cabbage ripe, but for a solace nothing gives me my meerschaum pipe. At evening when work ends and supper's put away, I seek my pipe, of all my friends the one I've missed all day, and then, with an easy chair, with slippers on my feet, before the blazing grate we share companionship complete. Its fragrant cherry stem I hold, its amber tip I kiss, and while its wreaths of smoke unfold I dream of only bliss. I watch its growing wealth of brown with thrills of true delight, and worldly care and fortune's frown are banished from my sight. Ah! no cigar can e'er supply the company I know, when two such friends, my pipe and I, bask in the firelight's glow.

SANTA CLAUS: "Are we to be as good friends as ever?"

Pawnbroker: "Oh, yes. I'll help you to hang up things this Christmas, as usual."

A WRITER tells a story of how a Yankee skipper contrived to free his ship from rats. While he lay in port he discovered that one of the British ships then in the harbour had among her cargo a great quantity of cheese. He thereupon found an excuse for hauling over to her and mooring his own packet alongside. The next step was to procure a plank, smear it well with an odoriferous preparation of red herrings, and place it so as to lead through one of the ports on board the Englishman. The immediate result was a wholesale emigration of the rats from the American ship's hold to the cheese-laden vessel alongside.

ELDER STARK and his worthy wife were the happy parents of nine children—girls and boys—and an uproarious set they were. Day and night they made things lively round the old hearthstone, even the darkness failing entirely to quell their turbulent spirits, for by the time the older ones had quieted down to sleep, the younger scions would begin to stir. But at the table, while the blessing was being asked, absolute quiet and attention was strenuously insisted upon. Dropping into dinner one day, says a correspondent—for the elder's hospitality was as large as his family was numerous—I watched with interest the marshalling of the fractious elements about the table. One after another was cuffed, chidden, or rebuked by the worthy dame, while the elder sat with hands meekly folded, watching eagerly for the first sign of a calm. At length, when a momentary lull settled down upon the expectant circle, the mother gave the table a smart rap with her knuckles, and shouted, "Quick quick, pa: now is your time!" And grace was said.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON,

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THE LANCET, July 23rd, 189-, says:—"We have had submitted to us a specimen of 'Reast's Patent Invigorator Corset.' It claims to possess two important qualifications: First, that it tends to prevent tight lacing, so common and so injurious; and Secondly that it lends support to the shoulders by means of straps which cross over the shoulders and thus afford valuable assistance to persons who are weak in the chest, or who have a tendency to stoop. Tight lacing and stooping generally go together—what prevents the one will tend to remedy the other. We have submitted the truth of these statements to practical test, and the Corsets have been found to be a great comfort. While affording a necessary support, these Corsets are made of a material so pliant that they really adapt themselves to all movements of the body."

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☛ Insist upon having our New Long Waist. If any difficulty in obtaining from the Drapers, write to the Patentee, 15 Claremont, Hastings, who will send them carriage paid and on approval.

BE SURE TO CUT IT MAY NOT APPEAR AGAIN. THIS OUT, IT MAY NOT APPEAR AGAIN.

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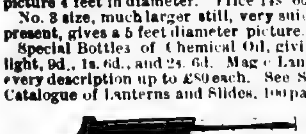

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A NEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

EVERYBODY knows the autophone and other similar instruments, and many persons complain of the harsh, discordant sounds these make, while, in addition, they are roughly finished, and have a common appearance. Now, the Helikon is quite different. It is contained in a handsome ebonised cabinet, relieved with gold ornamental linings. It stands on four ebonised pedestal supports. The music is produced by turning a handle at the side. Six pieces of music are given with each instrument. The notes are stamped out of round compressed cardboard discs, and are placed beneath a metal lever at the top. The music is sweet, and thoroughly melodious, not a grinding, harsh, hurdy gurdy jumble which offends the ear and disgusts the purchaser, but guaranteed to be really harmonious and thoroughly practical. You are not asked by your friends what tune it is *supposed* to be. Anyone can play the Helikon, and you can always buy extra tunes. For evening parties, picnic gatherings, the home, on board ship, and in every time and place, the Helikon is welcome. Each Helikon has six tunes given with it, selected from such popular songs as Killaloe, The Cruiskeen Lawn, Faust March, Wearing of the Green, The Guards Waltz, Stephanie Gavotte, La Mascotte Waltz, The Gondoliers Waltz, Home Sweet Home, The Blue Bells of Scotland, Where did you get that hat, Bonnie Dundee, Hark, hark my soul, In the sweet bye and bye, Jesus, lover of my soul, Rock of Ages, etc., etc. A full list of tunes given with each instrument. Extra tunes can be selected at 5s. per dozen, but the six given with the instrument must be left to us, purchasers however can say whether they wish for sacred or secular music. We have made special arrangements to send these instruments, each packed in a strong wooden case, with six tunes as above, carriage free, for the low price of 18s. 6d., if ordered before 28 days after date of this journal. Two may be had for 33s. In a few months there will not be a home in the kingdom that has seen one of these Helikons, and can afford to have one, that will be without, but the price will be very different, as we expect in a few days it will be raised, which, considering they are infinitely superior to many automatic machines sold at 40s. and 60s., it is not to be wondered at.

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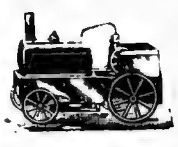

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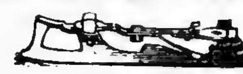

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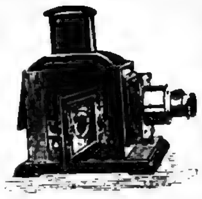

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Local Depot: 20 CHURCH STREET, KENSINGTON, LONDON, W. *Head City Warehouse, to which address all Letters*: 43 FARRINGDON ROAD, LONDON, E.C.

MISSING A HUSBAND.

MARSHALL HUNTER and Olga Danhof had been declared man and wife at twelve o'clock that morning. The bridegroom was a successful young merchant; the bride a daughter of a country doctor. They had driven off to the railway station, followed by the good wishes of their combined families, and had arrived in London late in the afternoon.

Rooms had been reserved for them at the Grand Hotel over Sunday, and it was their intention to start for Devonshire on Monday, to visit relatives of Mr Hunter's.

The usual electrical atmosphere enveloping ordinary bridal couples, discharging the secret of the newness of the bond to the rude gaze of a vulgar world, also betrayed its subtle presence around this distinguished and decidedly good-looking pair.

Olga was of Danish extraction, and possessed the delicate, refined features, slender shape, and stately bearing common to her fellow country-women; and Marshall had been a university man and stroke in his college boat before he went into business. At any rate, covert glances followed their course from the train to the cab, from the cab to the hotel, and even there the attendant beamed and glowed on Olga's unconscious face, as though he then and there took her under the special protection of his beneficent wing.

Mrs. Hunter retired to the bedroom to remove all traces of the dusty journey, while Marshall delved into the mysteries of his travelling-bag to bring forth a still more immaculate neck-tie than the one already encircling his manly throat. After adjusting it entirely to his satisfaction, he stepped on tiptoe to Olga's door and tapped gently. In response came a flutter of light footsteps, and the door glided just far enough back to allow a pretty head to peep out and enquire what was the matter.

"Only this, darling. I am going down to see about dinner, and tell them not to send all that pile of boxes up here. I may be ten minutes, but not a minute longer." So saying, he took his young wife's face between his hands, gazed fondly into her eyes, and then kissed her full on the lips.

Blushing and smiling, Olga retreated, and in a few moments reappeared in the sitting-room fresh and radiant. Her husband was still absent, so she made a tour of the room, and by wheeling the table to one side and manœuvring skilfully with some chairs in the way that women do, she contrived to dissipate the cold, sit-up-straight, lounge-if-you-dare mien assumed by each particular piece of furniture that has not been pushed or pulled into its place by feminine fingers.

Some distant footsteps made her poise lightly on one foot by the door, to listen if they were her husband's. When they passed by without pausing at the threshold, she walked over to the window and sat down in a big easy-chair. It was Saturday evening; the streets were thronged with people: the traffic was noisy and vigorous; the lights were being lit, as it was growing dusk. From Olga's point of view, limited by a country life to rare glimpses of human nature as met with in a busy city, especially in its buzzing, teeming centre, this was an interesting, engrossing sight.

She forgot her new condition of life for the time being, till a figure crossing the street in the distant haze of the growing twilight reminded her of Marshall. She began to wonder where he was; she was growing hungry, and it must be nearly dinner-time. She took out her watch; it was six o'clock. Why, he had been gone quite half an hour! She again turned her attention to the lively scene below, but her ears were alert to catch any sound that might be the herald of her husband's return.

Gradually the light faded from the room till all was dark but the running streaks reflected on the walls by the outside illuminations. Olga was slowly passing from a state of wonder to one of keen resentment. Marshall had no business to leave her alone so long; she was not accustomed to hotels, and he must know she would not like to be left alone for an hour so soon after their arrival. She made up her mind to be silent and reserved upon his return, yet when ten minutes later she heard a key turn in the outer door, she forgot her stern resolve and rushed out, exclaiming, "Why, Marshall, wherever have you been?"

"Excuse me, ma'am! I didn't know you was here. I thought you was down at dinner," came in strange accents to Olga's frightened ears.

"Who is it? What do you want," she faltered out.

"It's only the chambermaid, ma'am. Law, you've no light, ma'am; it's awful lonesome sitting in the dark," the good-natured woman went on in reassuring tones on catching sight of the pale uneasy face before her.

"Thank you," said Olga with all the dignity, as she flattered herself, of a matron of at least five years' standing. "I preferred sitting in the dark till my husband came." The woman had already lighted the gas and proceeded to draw the heavy window-curtains closely together, wondering, at the same time, what the husband was about not to come and take his pretty young wife down to dinner in proper time. Some intuition made her turn kindly to Olga and say:

"Here is the bell, ma'am, and if you should happen to want anything the boy will answer it." She then went out, closing the door gently after her.

Olga resented interference of any kind, so was not as grateful as she ought to have been. She looked at her watch again; it was seven o'clock. It was really remarkable that Marshall still delayed. He knew she had eaten nothing at the grand wedding-spread before they left, and she was famishing. She put her watch on the table in front of her, and said:

"If he does not come in ten minutes, I shall go downstairs alone and have my dinner."

This was mere bravado, as she inwardly knew, but it helped to kill time. It was the longest ten minutes she ever experienced, and before they were over she got up and paced impatiently up and down the room.

In front of the mirror she stopped and gazed at herself intently to see if she were looking as pale and hungry as she felt. Then she went down the little passage to the outer door of the rooms, and hesitated before gaining courage to open it and look out. The first glance into the corridor emboldened her to step outside and reconnoitre. Had she a lingering hope of catching sight of her husband's coat tails round the corner, and was it the quenching of that hope or the rapid inroad of a rampant healthy hunger that made her turn back quickly with a sick, sinking sensation at her heart?

She felt she should cry in one moment if he did not come, and as he did not turn up in that limited space of time, she did cry, and felt all the better for it. Then she looked again in the mirror, reflected that red eyelids were unbecoming, and whiled away another ten minutes in bathing her eyes with Cologne-water. A happy thought struck her. There was nothing to prevent her from ringing up the boy, and telling him she wanted some dinner brought to her room. No sooner thought than done. To her relief, the boy did not look at all astonished, and said "Yes'm!" with the same alacrity as if he were hourly in the habit of sending up stray meals to hungry people.

When he knocked at the door the second time, Olga forgot for an instant and jumped up delightedly to greet Marshall, as she fondly hoped. It is a painful confession, but true, nevertheless, that the well-appointed tray of savoury, odorous, edibles filling up the doorway restored her equanimity and instantly dispelled her disappointment.

"Well, if he doesn't come, he doesn't," she said, with stoical incoherence, as she sat down at the table with an air of resignation. This pretty plaintiveness soon changed its character when nine o'clock struck and she was still alone. Ten o'clock came round all too slowly, but brought no husband with it. She was frightened, indignant, frantic with dread and anger, in rapid succession.

No one in the world could ever have had such a wedding-day as she had had. It was awful—shameful—preposterous! She wished she had never met Marshall, was furious with herself for having married him; naturally, like other heroines of both real life and fiction, she wished she had never been born. No idea that some accident could have detained him crossed her mind till eleven o'clock.

When it did flash across her, she rose as if inspired, went to the door, came back again, put on her hat, and then walked boldly out to the head of the staircase. She preferred walking down to meeting strangers in the close confines of the lift. She went down briskly the first flight of stairs; then her pace slackened, her courage was oozing gently forth with each fresh step downward. The spectacle of a lady, young and pretty, descending the staircase at that late hour, with apparently such measured, calculated steps, glancing nervously from side to side, seemed to rouse deep interest in the loungers round the hall. They took their cigars from their mouths and gazed at her with a vacant, open-mouthed curiosity.

Olga at last alighted on the mat at the foot of the stairs and looked anxiously around, not knowing what to do next. A man, leaning over the counter, whispered to the attendant, who looked up and then instantly left his place and came forward to meet Olga. He almost electrified her with horror by speaking to her, although he merely inquired politely: "Can I do anything for you, madam?"

"No—no, thank you!" stammered Olga, nervously, "that is—I mean to say—have you seen my husband?"

The man tried to keep his countenance, and succeeded admirably. "Your husband, madam?" as though silently pondering as to when he had had the extreme felicity of seeing him; "what name, may I ask?"

"Hunter—Mr. Marshall Hunter. He came down to see—to see about"— she could not mention dinner; it would be dreadful to let this strange man know exactly how long she had been waiting. "He came down to see about our luggage early in the evening."

"I saw the gentleman go out about six or half-past," put in another attendant, standing near enough to catch the remarks, and who had noticed Mr. and Mrs. Hunter come in when they arrived from the station; "but I have not seen him since."

Down to zero sank Olga's hopes.

"Perhaps he's gone to the theatre, and, if so, he'll be back directly, madam," said the first man, suddenly arraigned, as it were, before the appealing look that had, unknown to herself, gathered in Olga's dark eye, felt that the responsibility of this missing husband somehow shifted to his shoulders.

His answer, instead of reassuring her, drove all the blood from her heart. "Very probably," she said, with dignity; "I am much obliged," and, bending her head with stately courtesy, she turned round and retraced her steps to her apartment.

There she sat on the rack of suspense the whole of that dreary night. It was the first watch she had ever kept, and not once, but a score of times, did she jump up and hurry to the door, fancying she heard a voice, a tap, a footstep.

Towards morning she lay down, weary and exhausted, on the couch and dozed off uneasily for an hour. Daylight only brought the painful reality more forcibly to view. "I will go home," she thought; "father will know. I will go home."

She moved about mechanically, and when she was dressed put a big, thick veil over her bonnet. No one must recognise her; no one must know till she reached her home. Her face seemed to have aged years during the night. Then she slipped down-stairs, hurried unperceived through the hall to the entrance, and stood alone in the street at seven o'clock in the morning. She took the first cab that passed, but had half an hour to wait at the station before starting.

It was Sunday morning, and the waiting-rooms were crowded, as usual, with light-hearted, merry holiday-seekers. Olga shrank from every eye into a dark, distant corner. The contrast between the happy bride of yesterday and the forsaken wife of to-day produced a sensation of humiliation that was worse to bear than the keenest physical pain or the severest mental sorrow.

A few hours later a station fly, driving up the road to Dr. Danhof's, drew more than one member of the family, with curiosity, to the front window. "Who can it be?" was the general remark.

"O father! it is Olga!" exclaimed Mrs. Danhof, breathlessly, too amazed to stir.

Mr. Danhof looked at the fly and its occupant silently for a moment; then stopping further remarks with an imperative "Hush!" he strode forward as the vehicle drew up at the steps. "Come to me, my child," he said, in inexpressibly tender tones, and without another word he took the shrinking, trembling figure in his arms and carried her bodily into the house. The others followed him silently, and the door was closed behind them. The driver gave a low, comprehensive whistle as he wheeled round, and drove back the way he had come, with a grave, dubious face.

* * * * * *

Ten minutes after leaving his wife Marshall Hunter turned on his heel to enter the lift and return to her, when a brisk ejaculation of, "Marshall, my boy, where did you spring from?" made him turn round sharply.

An old college chum stood there. Mutual explanations ensued, which ended in their retiring to drink each other's health, and more especially that of the bride. In the midst of an animated account as to how he intended spending the next few weeks, Marshall broke off suddenly with an agonised expression—

"Confound it all!" he exclaimed.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked his companion.

"That vile tooth of mine has started aching again, a charming accompaniment to one's honeymoon."

"Go and have it out, man," was the prompt reply.

"I will! It won't take ten minutes," said Marshall, consulting his watch. He hesitated as to whether he should run and tell Olga, but decided not to. His friend accompanied him across the street and then went off. Marshall strode along, glancing right and left for a dentist's sign. He found one soon, tore up the stairs, two steps at a time, looked breathlessly round for the right door, and as he reached it a man came out hastily and almost fell into his arms.

"Hey there. What's the matter?"

"Excuse me, no time to wait," the man said hurriedly, but he was not to be let off so easily as that. Marshall seized him by the arm and said:

"Are you Mr. Warner, the dentist?"

"Yes, sir; but I can't stop. I shall lose my train."

"Catch the next one instead; I shall not keep you a moment," said Marshall; "I have only one obstinate old molar that needs taking out."

The man hesitated.

"My assistant left half-an-hour ago, and I never perform an operation without him."

"Oh, bother the assistant; I don't want him, I assure you. I am in a desperate hurry myself, and have no wish to keep you here half the night." So saying, Marshall pulled the dentist by the arm back into his room.

Still expostulating, Mr. Warner put down his overcoat, lighted the gas, and pulled out the trays covered with the ugly implements of his profession, while Marshall seated himself expectantly in the operating-chair. Marshall had happened upon one of the curiosities of London in the person of Mr. Walker, who worthily maintained his reputation as such in his profession.

This operating-chair, for instance, was a patent of his own invention. The unsuspicious patient was always politely requested to place his arms lightly on the elbow rests at either side and put his feet on the rail below. Regarding the order as part of the dread operation, he would meekly comply. There were two springs behind the chair, which, at a pressure from the dentist's fingers, caused certain joints in the wood work to separate, and opened a hollow cavity beneath the arms and feet, into which they instantly dropped. The joints closed over them with a snap as soon as the springs were relieved from pressure.

Before Marshall knew what was happening, presto! his limbs were in a vice and he was an involuntary prisoner until the operation should be ——

"Look here, this is hardly necessary. I don't intend to kick, he urged."

Mr. Warner, still grumpy at being detained beyond his usual time, persisted that he would only pull the tooth out under those conditions. People always said beforehand they were not going to move.

"Oh, very well," said Marshall, snappishly; "only do hurry up." He was in a fever of impatience to get back to Olga, and wished he had never come.

After preliminary examination the dentist said: "Open your mouth," and upon being obeyed, he placed the customary wad to prevent it from closing during the operation. Then he turned one of the gas branches to within a foot of Marshall's face, and being quite ready he gave vent to a surly "Now!"

Marshall closed his eyes to prepare for the shock, but it seemed long in coming. Suddenly he heard a heavy body fall, with a thud, on the floor. He opened his eyes—the dentist had vanished. He looked down, and there was the man lying on the floor, flat on his back, with a white, drawn face.

"Great Scott! Here's a pretty go," thought Marshall, his first instinct to spring to the man's assistance being abruptly checked by the iron grasp of the patent chair. "I'd better yell out for help," he thought, forgetting the wad in his mouth.

"Kk-k-krr!" a prolonged gurgle, brought Marshall to the unpleasant consciousness that it was as impossible to cry out for help as it had been for him to jump up and procure it.

He kept still for a moment. He had not yet grasped the gravity of his situation, but it was beginning to dawn upon him. The man on the floor still lay motionless. "Let me consider," thought Marshall to himself; "the first thing is how to get out of this beastly chair." He gave a vehement tug here, a violent wrench there, strained every muscle of his sinewy, athletic limbs, with no apparent result but that of causing the springs to seem even more tenaciously fixed than they were before.

He glared at the dentist's limp figure; he did not feel in the least sorry for him. His one thought was Olga and how to get back to her. He pictured her listening expectingly for his footstep, and imagined how he would explain matters, and how sympathetic and tender her pretty eyes would grow. It was useless to struggle any longer; somebody would pass the room soon, or come in; he would be freed very shortly. So he soothed himself for a few moments.

Soon heavy footsteps sounded on the stairs, voices became distinguishable. "Now it's all right," thought Marshall, immeasurably relieved; "I wish I could call out to them."

Nearer came the voices. "Old Warner's not gone yet. There's a light in his office. Warner!" shouted a voice, "aren't you coming?" and a hand shook the door, which had a spring patent lock, also of Mr. Warner's invention.

A second's pause, then another voice: "The old beggar's in one of his crusty moods. Come along we can't wait for him."

Marshall followed each sound and word with an intensity of concentrated thought that should have worked the same magic results as those achieved by a professional transferer of thought. He tried to call out, he knocked his head vigorously against the chair, and if the men had not been talking and shuffling their feet about impatiently, they would have wondered at and tried to discover the meaning of those curious sounds.

However, they moved on, and the clatter of their steps on the bare wooden staircase grew more and more indistinct and gradually faded away in the distance. With each receding footfall, Marshall grew more desperate. From the certainty of immediate succour, he fell, with one deep swoop, to the horrible conviction that he was a hopeless prisoner. He was in despair. The building, which was cut up entirely into business-offices, was now as silent as the grave. The men who had just gone were evidently the last to leave.

After yielding for some moments to feelings of deep despondency, he again resolved to face the matter boldly and consider the situation from every aspect. "I am an unwilling prisoner—there is no doubt about that," he thought; "the man on the floor is dead—that is a disagreeable enough fact without any of the accompanying circumstances. This is my wedding-day, and of all unlucky beggars on the face of this earth I am the chief. My poor little bride is anxiously awaiting me, and has no idea where I am. My delay must appear extraordinary, considered from any and every point of view.

"This is Saturday evening, and——" here Marshall's eyes blazed with passion; he inwardly reviled himself, his officious college friend—who had first put this confounded notion in his head—the dentist, and the world at large, vehemently and furiously. The thought which caused this severe mental perturbation was an appalling one. It was Saturday, therefore business would be virtually suspended till Monday morning. The building would be closed for another thirty-six hours.

Nobody knew where he was; nobody could hear him, for he could not speak; was ever man more unfortunately situated, and on his wedding-day, too? Again he roused himself, and this time he fell into a tearing rage. He shook and fought with his rigid foe, twisted his arms almost out of their sockets, nearly dislocated his ankles in their convulsive contortions, threw the upper part of his body with stupendous force backward, in the vain hope of knocking the chair over and smashing it in its fall—he never considered that he would also run a risk of sharing in the general smash-up, should there happen to be one—but it was firmly screwed into the floor and never budged an inch.

Exhausted with so much fruitless effort, he paused aching in every limb. His head was on fire, his feet were cold as ice. Now his jaws began to ache. How to get rid of the wad was the next consideration; but all he could do was to painfully shift the obstruction from side to side. These personal discomforts and physical miseries were nothing compared to his mental suffering. The thought of Olga drove him to distraction; he was afraid he should go mad; his brain whirled and reeled.

Meanwhile the evening had become well advanced. It was the hour when Olga had allowed herself to be comforted with an appetising dinner, little suspecting the fearful situation of the unhappy cause of all her misery. As time wore on Marshall ran through the whole gamut of emotion and rage, and finally settled down into a sullen, apathetic, would-be-stoical mood. An undercurrent of hope that something unexpected would happen to release him kept him from absolute despair. It was well he did not realise that retention till Monday morning might mean death itself under those peculiar and strained conditions.

He began to look round and mechanically take in the character of his surroundings. The flaring gas-jet close to his face at first dazzled his eyes, but they soon grew accustomed to the glare. He counted the small drawers lining the wall to the left; he counted them up; he counted them down; he counted them diagonally; he added the results together, and then made a mental calculation of the square of the whole number; he directed his attention to the adjustable tray of instruments at his side and named them all in his mind; he examined minutely every joint and feature of the automatic boring machine.

Then he followed with keen observation the wanderings of a Bohemian blue-bottle that vainly strove to brave the light without scorching its gauzy wings. The buzzing accompaniment to its dizzy dance was a welcome sound in the silent room, and when at last, in the pride of its invincibility, it deliberately waltzed into the centre of the burning flame, and with one explosive buzz fell to the ground and gave up the ghost, Marshall felt as if his only friend had forsaken him.

The window facing him looked over the roof of a low adjacent house, but owing to the gas-light inside the only object he could see distinctly was his own reflection. This duplicate of himself afforded him some consolation; it was a kind of companion in his loneliness, though he grimly speculated as to what Olga would say or think if she saw him cut such a sorry figure as this temporary mirror betrayed.

It was midnight before he awakened to the fact that a small clock was ticking somewhere in the room. By screwing his head round till it gave him a crick in the neck he discovered its position on a wall-bracket. He groaned when he saw that the hands pointed to half-past twelve. Those hours already passed had dragged so painfully through every minute of their course that he had imagined it was nearly morning.

Olga—Olga—Olga became again his only thought. His apathy flew, and despair, deep and tragic, took its place. What was his wife doing? How would she act under this unparalleled trial?

Two big, scalding tears gathered under his closed eyelids as he pictured her crying and wringing her hands—those pretty little hands he loved to kiss and caress. Then he saw her pale, indignant, insulted at this incomprehensible desertion; he imagined her frightened, starting at every sound, dreading to go out alone in the strange city, feeling herself forsaken, outraged, disgraced.

At these terrible mental visions the strong man moaned and writhed. Drops of water stood out on his forehead, his head seemed to swell, and a singular feeling compressed his chest and hindered his breathing. Then everything became blurred and indistinct. The next moment he had fainted, and become mercifully oblivious to the reality of his miserable situation.

He must have passed from this state to one of unconscious slumber, because when he opened his eyes again the gray dawn was creeping in at the window, making the gaslight change to a pale and sickly hue, and bringing out, in dim, shadowy outline, the roofs and chimneys of the surrounding houses.

He was aching in every limb; stinging pains shot through his arms and up his legs; his jaws were numb and stiff; his throat was parched and swollen. He looked round at the clock; it was six o'clock. Thank heaven the night was over. With the breaking of another day, hope rose glimmering in his heart.

He ran over in his mind all the possibilities of escape during the day—the assistant might return on some errand; the gas would be seen burning through the transom should any one approach the room; his friend might return to the hotel, hear of his strange disappearance, and give some clue to the mystery.

That lifeless form on the floor had no terror for him, fortunately, and unless he moved his head and looked right down he could not see it. It was an awful death, he thought, and what if he should die too, and never meet his wife again—never explain what had happened! How it was his brain did not give way through that fearful ordeal he never knew.

Hour after hour passed in sickening, agonising suspense. The tortures of waiting, the faintness of hunger, the compulsory, strained position of his body, combined to overcome and undermine his physical strength, and finally deprive him of all feeling of consciousness.

A stinging, flaming sensation suddenly gathered the scattered embers of his half-extinguished senses together, and caused them to emit a small flicker of stirring, glimmering vitality. The heat increased until he was sufficiently restored to locate the sensation. It was in his throat, which was on fire. Molten lead seemed to be trickling down, drop by drop.

By dint of oft-renewed efforts he slowly opened his eyes. Where was he? Was this death or life? A strange face was bending over him. He tried to move, and to his great joy found that his limbs were free, and the magnitude of that emotion made him half lose consciousness again.

Deliverance, though tardy, had really come at last. The double tragedy slowly developing within those four walls had been averted by the timely entrance of the caretaker of the building, who had come in to prepare the room for the business of the week. The horror-stricken man had had presence of mind to release Marshall from the fatal chair, drag him to a lounge, and then rush off for a doctor. Brandy, used as the speediest, readiest, restorative, had brought him to his senses, under the impression that his throat was on fire.

A very few words explained the situation, a cab was summoned, and with the doctor's aid he regained the hotel, exactly twenty-four hours after he had left it for "only ten minutes." The anxiety with which he had mentally followed Olga's probable treatment of his peculiar actions prepared him for her flight. Exhaustion, apart from the fact that the last Sunday train had already gone, checked his first wild impulse of instantaneous pursuit.

However, the first train speeding northward on Monday morning carried with it not only the papers with the thrilling account of the dentist's sudden death and harrowing sufferings of his unlucky patient, but also the chief hero of the drama himself. How will he fare at his wife's hands? Ask yourself what you would do under similar strange circumstances, and then you will know.

THE GAY CONDUCTOR.

The conductor I trow is the luckiest man
  Who dwells on the face of the earth;
Of all the gay fellows I happen to know,
  He's got the most comfortable berth.

For when the tram stops, and the people alight,
  Such maids as in beauty abound,
He will seize by the hand, the elbow, or arm,
  And gracefully swing to the ground.

Little help he vouchsafes to those who help need,
  Sad spinster antique and alone:
They can stumble and tumble, and fall to the ground,
  The affair is entirely their own.

The old and infirm, the maimed and the halt,
  Get never a steadying touch;
But the young and the beautiful, handsome and fair,
  Can never escape his strong clutch.

But while it seems wrong, it is really right;
  For surely you all are aware
That the faithful conductor's chief duty in life
  Is getting his hands on the fare.

White: "What did Joblots say when Jessie said she would be a sister to him?"

Greene: "He said that was satisfactory to him provided they were to share alike under the old man's will."

A fashion journal devoted to the tastes and interests of the sex says: "If young ladies want blooming complexions they should rub their cheeks with snow." Better rub them with moustaches. This process imparts a far more glowing hue. Besides, moustaches are always handy, but snow is not.

A seedy-looking man applied to a Parliamentary candidate for ten pounds. He said that a few friends of the candidate wanted to make preparations to celebrate his election.

"But suppose I am defeated?"

"Well, then we can use the money in celebrating your not being elected. We are not particular, as long as we celebrate."

I have little sympathy with those who are continually telling young people that they should be indifferent to the appearance of future life partners, because "beauty is but skin deep." I never hear this phrase without thinking of the reply which was once made by an Irish girl, a friend of mine. She was good-looking, of course, being Irish, and she was talking to a young man of an opposite description. Thinking that the lady was rather proud of her looks, and wishing to "take her down a peg," the young man remarked, in the course of conversation:—

"But, you know, beauty is only skin deep."

She fixed him with her glittering eye, and, with one of her sweetest smiles, she answered:—

"I know that beauty is only skin deep, but ugliness goes into the bone."

IN HIS STEAD.

MORTON HOLT'S name was synonymous with success. He was a man of boundless resource and commanding intellect. In his early years he had worked with unwearied perseverance, giving himself no rest until, through his law practice, he had amassed a fortune the very mention of which commanded men's respect.

He was never hampered or retarded by haste; each move he made was sure and advantageous; and if he had gained the reputation of possessing a heart that was in a constant state of repose, in the face of his success men thought none the less of him. They knew that worthier men had failed, while he had gone triumphantly on to the alluring goal.

A half-hour of his company was as beneficial as a cold shower-bath. The most loquacious curtailed his words and made them to the point under Holt's coldly critical eyes.

His office was considered the best law school in London. His clerks disliked him thoroughly, but accorded him a meed of respect they gave no other man. He was impervious to their want of good-will; he did not care for their esteem, he exacted only the unconditional obedience he obtained.

No man came to the office late more than once. Holt's urbane hope that the late-comer's health was improving, and that he would soon be entirely recovered, did not pass current as genuine solicitude. But, again, he never demanded a moment of their time after office hours; he was essentially a just man. There was no one ready or adroit enough to retort to his stinging satire, but the men were willing to bear it, for in his monetary dealings he was extremely liberal.

It was only after Holt's marriage, when he was nearing forty, that men drew nearer to him. They were glad to discover that he was not so invulnerable as they had supposed.

The world knew nothing of her until she came to them as Holt's wife, but soon after reports originated that her parentage had been enveloped in mystery, and that Holt had rescued her from the temptations that come to bitter poverty, and educated her at his own expense. Her faultless face and manner seemed to give the lie direct to the rumour that had gained ground, and she took her place with unquestioned supremacy.

Holt lavished upon her a fund of love that most men would have found sufficient for a large family. It was almost pitiful to watch him while with her. For her sake he forced himself to go into society, which, hitherto, he had considered unrelieved martyrdom. He threw open his house to his acquaintances because she was a young woman, and he was determined not to weary her, but he deemed it his home only on those evenings when they were alone. He chafed under the yoke he put round his neck, but she was never allowed to become aware of his feelings.

She was, perhaps, the only person who did not fear Holt. Those who thought she had married him from a feeling of gratitude were compelled to change their belief on seeing her sweet graciousness to him. She bewildered the world, as well as Holt, by her smile.

She insisted upon his taking care of his health, and walked to the office with him nearly every morning, saying that if left to himself he would drive, and so have no exercise. She would call for him in her victoria at five, and sometimes alight and admonish King, the junior partner, for not relieving Holt of more of the routine work. Holt gave himself over to the luxury of being taken care of without complaint.

Holt was seated alone in his private office, having ended the last audience he intended to grant that afternoon. It had been a most trying and fatiguing day, but his face showed no sign of weariness. A knock came at the door and Holt, recognising his wife's form outlined against the glass, arose and opened the door for her. At that moment his face was almost reduced from plainness by his smile.

"I am about to disappoint you," he observed, motioning her to be seated. "I am called out of town on important business, and shall not be able to take you to the theatre as arranged. You know how much I regret this, but it is imperative that I go."

"Why cannot Mr. King go in your stead?" she demanded, with evident displeasure at his default. "I am sure you could save yourself many a task by using him in your place. You are too unsparing of your own time and self."

Holt looked at her in amusement.

"Do you not know you are the only one who thinks me thoughtful of others? They would tell you, and truthfully, that I am going because I know that I can provide against accidents and defeat more surely than can King. Perhaps, in time, I may lose through your influence some of my hardness. Besides, King has work that will keep him here close on to midnight. If it were not so, I should appoint him my substitute, that you need not stay at home."

"Will he stay here all alone?" she asked, feigning an interest in the affairs of the firm.

"All alone. Perhaps the only one in the building. There is no need to shiver for King; there is no danger."

"But there must be danger, all alone in this immense building. I am glad you are not to stay," she laughed, looking at him tenderly. "I think I shall tell Mr. King he had better bring some one along for company."

"He is out at present. I must send you home now, for I have some few instructions to leave. You well know how much I dislike to disappoint you."

"I am disappointed," she murmured, "for I thought we should enjoy the evening together, but I am going to bear it bravely. Shall you be late?"

"It is possible I may be home by twelve, certainly not before."

Holt saw her to the carriage, and watched her drive away. On re-entering the building, he turned his ankle, and found it difficult to mount the stairs. He made no mention of it in the outer office, but directed them to tell Mr. King he wished to see him at once. It was some ten minutes later that King entered. Holt was an intelligent giant, King a physical giant. Beside Holt, who was gaunt and yellow, his health and good looks were so evident as to seem almost an impertinence.

"You will have to go to Mr. Rodney's, King; I have again turned my ankle. Make haste, and you will be able to catch the six o'clock train. I shall take your place and complete those documents this evening."

"Let them go until morning," urged King; "I will manage to get down early enough before they are needed. I can see the pain you are suffering."

"We have no time for condolences just at present," interrupted Holt, wincing under King's compassionate looks; "I shall finish the papers to-night."

"I met Mrs. Holt as I came back to the office, and she told me of her disappointment. Are you going home?"

"I shall go home to dine, and come down later. You might join me here on returning from Rodney's, when we can go into the matter fully."

Again impressing upon him the wisdom of going home to dinner, King left the office hurriedly, scarcely hoping to catch the train.

Holt arose, preparatory to going home. He repressed an exclamation of acute pain as his weight came down on his ankle. If he went home, he doubted his being able to come down again. As his wife did not expect him, he decided to stay at the office and commence on King's work.

He walked to the door, telling the chief clerk, who was then the only one left in the office, that he would stay a while longer, but made no mention of his intention to spend the evening at the office.

He waited in his own office until he heard the man leave. Then he locked the outer doors and went to King's office, which was a small room, seldom used because it did not connect with the others; to enter, it was necessary to go out into the passage-way. Holt lit the gas and began his work.

The clock struck six, and Holt remembered he had been too busy that morning to interrupt his labours for luncheon. He wondered what his wife would say if she knew he was still at work, without thought of eating. It is not altogether unpleasant to have somebody interested in one's welfare.

At half-past seven he neatly folded the last document and pushed them to one side. He knew that what he had accomplished in two hours would have taken King double the time. Thinking of the three hours that still remained before King's possible return, he almost regretted having directed him to meet him at the office that night.

He took from his pocket a jeweller's box containing a string of rubies; it had caught his eye that morning, and he had found time to purchase it, though not for luncheon. He turned the gas low, and leaned back in his chair, holding the rubies against his face. No sound broke the stillness, except now and then the gnawing of some rat in the wainscotting.

Suddenly he leaned forward in his chair, intently listening. He detected a soft foot fall in the corridor—it was the step of one who was moving carefully, so as to conceal all noise. He heard a key inserted in the lock of the door leading to the office, then it was withdrawn. He turned the gas so low it emitted only a mere spark, and, pulling open the drawer of the table, drew out a revolver, which he knew King always kept there.

The person in the hall came with but one object, and it is fair to suppose that the man who purposes committing burglary is desperate enough to shoot to save himself or his plunder. Holt was prepared for his entrance, and determined to act at once without parley, for his accident, to some degree, crippled him, and he did not propose to let go his hold on life of his own free will.

He had not long to wait. The steps paused at his door; then the key turned in the lock, and the door swung open. Holt saw the face was masked by some dark stuff, and pulled the trigger. The intruder fell forward, and Holt turned up the light. The burglar had fallen on the other side of the table, and Holt walked towards him. He moved slowly, remembering his injured foot; he was in no hurry to view his victim.

And then he saw it was his wife! The black lace scarf had fallen away, exposing her perfect face.

She had grown nervous because he had not come home to dinner, and had come down for him, and he had shot her! He carried her over to the couch that stood in one corner of the room. As her head touched the pillow she raised her hand to his face, murmuring:

"Rob, Rob, why did you hurt me?"

Holt stepped back in paralysed fear—she was calling him by King's name. She was here in King's office, and, because of the sudden change of plans, he had discovered her. He staggered blindly to a chair. The last few months unrolled themselves before him, and he reviled his own lack of penetration. He brought his hand down on the table with such force that the rubies danced madly on their slender thread of gold, throwing off their dazzling lights. He wished dully they were diamonds; their red hurt his eyes. He took them up fiercely, as if to crush them, and they cut his hand.

He looked up at her. She was leaning forward, watching him with dilated eyes.

"Why are you here?" she cried; "you must not kill him. You must be satisfied with my death. Promise me you will not kill him."

He had had no thought of King, but, on the instant, seeing her anxiety for him, he decided on his mode of action.

"No, I shall not kill him," he responded, coldly.

"You frighten me," she whispered. "If you only would not sit there smiling to yourself. You have no right to complain—I made you happy for a year."

"So you did," agreed Holt, "it was very good of you. I would have laid down my life for you. Would King, do you think?"

She did not know what course to pursue. Finally she said, "Yes." Still he sat, holding the rubies, calmly smiling. "Take me home," she said.

"Your home is with King; and, as you know, this is his office."

"You can not mean to leave me here?" she exclaimed.

"Why not? You are nothing to me, and King will be here in the course of two or three hours. He was very urgent in pressing me to go home to dine; I see the reason now. Unfortunately, however, I had turned my ankle, and, as it was rather painful, determined to stay here."

"You regret it now?" she breathed. "You are sorry the veil is torn from your eyes?"

He caught his lip in his teeth. What she said was true—he regretted being turned out of his fool's paradise. He caught up his gloves and top-coat.

"What are you doing?" she questioned. "You are not going to leave me here alone?"

"If you are afraid, I can stay with you for a time longer—I have no very pressing engagement. I can stay with you until the end, if you prefer it, and shortly after King will probably be here."

"Are you going to let him find me here?" she asked, waiting for his answer with suspended breath.

"Of course. You said he would be willing to die for you—he shall have the chance. The bullet lodged in your breast is from King's revolver, and you are in King's office. He will come in and fall down beside you, and try to warm you to life by his caresses, and perhaps his clothes will not be quite spotless when he arises. Knowing the extent of his guilt, he will not be as collected and rational as I, and will stay with you, futilely searching for some plausible excuse to give the world for your presence. No one is aware I am here, and it will be a very clear case against him."

She drew a shuddering sigh. "I will not die yet. I shall call for help."

"No one heard the shot," he reminded her. "Don't move, you will only hasten the end," he cautioned, as she attempted to reach him. "You must not come nearer me. My apparel must not be disordered when I reach the club."

Looking at him, she foresaw her defeat, but did not desist from begging him to take her away. Once he laughed low, showing her the rubies, saying she deserved great credit for the cleverness with which she had deceived him, but otherwise he made no response. She cried for help once, but was answered only by the echo of her own voice as it rang through the lofty building.

Her voice died away from sheer exhaustion.

An hour passed; then she ceased to plead for King or for a drink of water. When Holt looked up at last, she lay back on the couch—dead.

Carefully picking his steps, he walked over to the table, took up the papers which he intended to put in his own desk, and destroyed all trace of his presence. He looked searchingly at himself, but he could find no sign of the struggle through which he had passed.

He drew out his watch. It was shortly after nine. It was time he reached the club. He turned the light low, and as he did so glanced over at her. She seemed to be watching him. How he hated her! He had shown it by the torment he had made her endure.

But she had made his happiness—the only happiness he had ever known. Now he would go home to the lonely house, bereft of even the memories of that time.

Surely she moved. He walked towards her, and grasped her by the arm, crying:

"You are to come with me."

He waited for a second in sickening fear, then, thrusting the rubies before her, added:

"Don't make believe you don't hear me. I forgive you. See, they are for you."

He released his hold. He saw she was dead.

He must go—he had told her he would go to the club. He passed his hand in front of his eyes, as if he had grown suddenly blind. The lights would glare up there; it was so quiet and dark in the little room.

Some one was coming up the steps, whistling. It was King, the man she had loved. He clutched the revolver, levelling it towards his own forehead. No, he would not disfigure himself—there had always been too much contrast between them.

The cheery whistle sounded louder, clearer. Holt aimed at his heart and fired. Of him it has been jestingly said, he had no heart.

The whistle died away.

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IT'S A JOLLY GOOD YEAR ALL ROUND.

The sunshine was bright in the springtime of life,
The shadows remarkably few;
With infantine gambols the season was rife,
And I'd nothing whatever to do.
My brains were untroubled by thought,
My limbs were unwearied by toil,
My heart, it knew less than it ought
Of the rush and the crush of the mob.
So truly I'm fain to conclude,
Of all the glad times I recall,
This season to which I allude,
Was the very best season of all.

Ah, stay! as I'm writing I see the sweet face
Of her, my heart's earliest choice:
The maidenly figure of marvellous grace:
I thrill at the sound of her voice.
I see the old light in her eyes,
I glow at the touch of her glove,
I feel all the charms that comprise
The glorious summer of love.
Oh, really I'm bound to conclude,
Of all the glad times I recall,
This season to which I allude,
Is the very best season of all.

Ah me! it's all gone with the glow of the sun,
When shadows of autumn descend.
The summit is reached, and the slope has begun
Down which I shall slide to the end.
Ha, ha! how I laugh at the dreams
That hare-brained, ridiculous youth
Exults in and foolishly deems
Personifications of truth.
And so, after all, I conclude
Of spring-time, of summer, or fall
The last one to which I allude
Is the very best season of all.
And, perhaps, you'll allow me to say,
Notwithstanding the dreams I have found,
That, viewed in a sensible way,
It's a jolly good year *all round*.

A SINGULAR LAWSUIT.

Jean Renard was a poor tiler of Grenouilleville who had a wife and two children. Jean was no advocate of polygamy. He found one wife quite enough, for La Louise, as she was called, often led him a hard life.

Jean worked with a will from morning to night; he was full of courage and strength, and yet, in spite of all the hours he spent on the roofs in company with love-lorn cats, he barely managed to eke out a living.

"The two youngsters, their mother, and me," said he, "that makes four, and four stomachs to fill is not a small affair; it means work, Jean!"

And work he did, poor man, and yet he never knew what it meant to have a few spare coins laid by in the corner of a drawer.

The winter of 1879-1880, cruelly rigorous, as will be remembered, taxed the slater rudely. No work to be had; to warm his blood he was obliged, from time to time, to whip his arms back and forth; but work also would have kept his blood in circulation, and in addition would have brought in money for dinners and breakfasts.

Often, at this time, Jean Renard looked up at the high steeple of the church of Grenouilleville. In many places the ruined slates had fallen away piece by piece. What a lot of work there was to be done on that spire!

Of course, it was dangerous work. Jean knew that, but he knew his trade too.

Long ago, also, the cock that perched on the summit of this spire had been blown down during a storm. The parson had often been asked by his people to reinstate this cock in his high station, and had always replied that he asked nothing better, if he could manage to do so without its costing him anything.

Jean Renard had an inspiration: "Suppose I propose to the parson to put back his cock for nothing, if he will give me the work that is to be done on the steeple."

But the parson was a miser, and he replied that it made no difference to him if the steeple was leaky, as he did not sleep there.

"Repair as much as you want to," said he to Jean, "but I will not give you a farthing."

The slater found this too little, and gave up the affair, keeping, however, a grudge against the parson.

At about this epoch there was a change in the Mayoralty of Grenouilleville. The new magistrate inaugurated his rule by asking the parson to repaint the flag, covered with rust, which crowned the steeple.

"But," objected the parson, "you do not ask me if I have the money to pay for this work."

"Do not bother yourself about that," replied the mayor; "have the flag repainted, and the municipality shall pay."

"Very well, then, since you wish it," replied the parson, none too happy at seeing the national colours float over his steeple.

True to his principles, the parson beat down the price, franc by franc, in making his bargain with Jean Renard; and when it was concluded, the priest added, "And it is well understood that putting back the cock is included in the bargain."

"Oh, no," said Jean, "that is not understood at all. That, you know, sir, doubles the labour; and also, the cock has to be put much higher than I mount to paint the flag. Placing the cock is a perilous job, so perilous that it is my life you are asking me to risk for nothing. No."

"Yes, my friend," said the parson, with an unctuous smile; "you will do that for the love of God."

"Do you say masses for the love of God, Monsieur le parson? I consent to replace the cock, but you will add fifty francs to your price; it is worth that."

"Fifty francs!" cried the priest. "That I will not! How you run on! Look here, Jean, once you are up there, it won't be much of an effort to go a few steps higher."

"But if misfortune befalls me, do you think you, for the love of God, will care for and bring up my children?"

"Come! come! No more talking. I'll give you ten francs."

"Ah, Mr. Parson, you take advantage of my poverty. You know I must earn a living, and so you get the better of me. In short, I accept for ten francs more."

The parson, delighted at his success, spread the good news through the town. At last the cock was going to be in place once more!

. . . . . .

It was December, and the bad weather still persisted. Jean, therefore, was forced to wait several days before undertaking his dangerous ascent. At length the rain ceased; by night the clouds had gone, and next morning all the roofs were covered with frost.

"Clear weather," said the slater. "I can go to work to-day."

All the good folks of Grenouilleville were assembled in front of the church, in the large square, to see Jean Renard hoist himself to the top of the steeple. He entered the church to pass by a window at the base of the spire.

When he appeared, throwing one of his ropes over the first hook of the steeple, there was a murmur of consternation from the watching crowd; but terror became paroxysm when Jean, near the middle of his ascent, almost lost his equilibrium by the breaking of an iron eaten by rust. The upturned faces were pale with emotion, but the dexterous slater quickly grasped a higher hook.

Nevertheless, he was long in mounting. It was nearly three o'clock in the afternoon when he touched the base of the cross at the top of the steeple. He lashed himself thereto, feet and body, and begun his first work—the painting of the flag. In about half an hour cheers and applause broke from the crowd; the national colours floated over the steeple.

The hardest part, though, was yet to be done; the cock had to go up. Two feet more to mount; and to crown the danger, it was the cross that had to be climbed, that is to say, a mere bar of iron.

In December it is soon night; already the watchers saw but a faintly outlined form amid the mists of twilight, and they began to grow uneasy. How would poor Jean Renard manage now? He could no longer see to work, and was in greater danger than ever.

Suddenly a small light showed in the darkening night. Jean Renard, being a careful man, had thought to carry with him a lantern. Soon nothing more could be seen but that tiny light, gleaming on high like a star lost in the clouds, and the anxious crowd began to disperse. Jean continued working.

. . . . . .

On the morrow, at dawn, the early risers of Grenouilleville saw a frightful sight.

Jean Renard hung, head downward, from the top of the steeple, his feet still held by his ropes.

The unfortunate man had doubtless lost his balance, and in falling his work apron had turned backward, thus concealing his face. He no longer moved; dead probably some hours since.

The parson, who was at once apprised, expressed his sentiments in intolerable form:—

"Unlucky fellow! Well, at least, he had put back the cock!"

"Yes," was replied, "but we cannot leave the corpse up there; it must be got down."

"That is true," said the priest: "it must be brought down, but who will do it?"

"That, Mr. Parson, is your business. Get workmen from the city, if you must, at no matter what cost: the body of Jean Renard must not remain up there."

Get workmen from the city—that was very expensive, and the parson hesitated, but it had to be done. Just then it was learned in the village that the priest had pushed his avarice to the point of trying to get his weather-cock repaired for nothing, and feelings of aversion for him developed in the breasts of his parishioners.

A subscription was opened for the orphans of the tiler, and the same day a hundred francs were paid in; little, but the people of Grenouilleville were not rich. A man had gone to the city, but they asked two hundred francs, and the parson found that ridiculously exorbitant. So the next day, the corpse being still suspended from the steeple, funeral ceremonies were held in front of the great church door, draped for the occasion; and all Grenouilleville joined in the last prayers for Jean Renard.

But to inter the body, it had to be got down from its lofty perch. The fellow-citizens of the slater this time showed great decision. They would have the body, and if necessary, would force the parson himself to go and get it.

When that person left the church, he found himself confronted by a threatening crowd.

"No, Mr. Parson. He shall not stay up there; it is an outrage!"

"My good friends, I am quite of your opinion; so get him down!"

"You shall go yourself, since you refuse to pay some one else to go." And already the most audacious, the anti-clerical faction, pushed the parson backward toward the church.

Thoroughly alarmed, he at length exclaimed,—

"It is impossible; I do not know how to climb on roofs. I'll pay! I'll pay!"

"They ask two hundred francs to come from the city," cried the men on all sides.

"Oh! but I'll give them——"

"Stop! Stop!" cried a voice. "I'll do the job for a hundred francs." And a man forced his way toward the parson, through the amazed villagers.

"Jean Renard! Jean Renard!" burst from their lips.

. . . . . .

It was indeed Jean. He explained in a few words how he had planned to trick the parson, who meant to get the better of him. After his work was finished, he came down, entered the bell tower, and dressed a dummy in his clothes; he then remounted and hung his effigy from the steeple.

But effigy or not, it was a dishonour to Grenouilleville, suspended from their church spire, and must remain there no longer.

Jean Renard climbed up and unhooked the supposititious corpse, which fell upon the square beneath, amid general cheers and laughter.

The parson thus got the worst of the bargain; his money after all, paid for the weather cock.

. . . . . .

This was not the end of the matter, however.

"I gave Jean Renard a first-class funeral service," thought the parson, "and he shall pay for it."

He then began suit against the slater, who, naturally, refused to pay.

"I did not ask you for burial service, Mr. Parson."

"None ask that, my son, and yet all finish that way. You were thought dead."

"But I was not, happily; and also, in that case, it is never the customer who pays. Carry your bill to my heirs."

"To your heirs! You have none, since you are not dead."

"Then why did you bury me?"

"But, unhappy man, I prayed for the salvation of your soul!"

"The salvation of my soul! Pray for the salvation of your own, for I am not sure that I have a soul."

"Heretic!" murmured the priest.

"The cause is heard," said, in his turn, the justice of the peace, who gave judgment as follows:

"Considering that Jean Renard tricked the parson, but that the parson had first tricked Jean Renard;

"Considering that the trade of a priest is to pray for the salvation of souls, as it is that of slaters to set up weather-cocks;

"But, whereas the slater could no more have set up a weather-cock that had not fallen down than the parson could pray for the salvation of a soul that was not in peril;

"Whereas, finally, Jean Renard affirms that he has no soul, and in that case no use for prayers;

"We, therefore, reject the suit of the Parson of Grenouilleville, and do condemn him to pay the costs thereof."

And all Grenouilleville laughs yet.

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Grace: "Y-es. I've kept one for the first week in January for the past seven years."

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Jack Rounder: "Isn't Miss Belle a beauty?"

Miss A: "Yes. But you know beauty is only skin deep."

J. Rounder: "Well, I'm no cannibal. That's deep enough for me."

Seven or eight of them were talking in the court the other day about the best position in which to sleep.

"I lie on my face," said one.

"I lie on my back," said another.

"I lie on my left side," said a third, and so on until it reached an old fellow writing at a desk.

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THE MEZZO-MATTI.

"GOOD-MORNING to you, Beppo. I have come after my shoes," cried a voice, in the happiest of tones, outside the lattice.

"Your shoes?" answered the cobbler, from inside, with a mingled expression of anger and amazement, as he hammered away at his work.

"Why, yes, certainly, I want my shoes; are they not finished?"

"Not even on the lasts," replied Beppo, in the most indifferent of tones.

"Oh! say you are joking. For heaven's sake do not play upon my feelings! Not finished? Why, I ordered them ten days ago, and I had your most solemn promise—which the saints have recorded—that they should be ready to-day at noon. Alas! Alas! What shall I do? I cannot go to church with Idiletta without my shoes; and to-day, at noon precisely, I am to be married!"

"I cannot help that, Tito, my prince of bridegrooms. Put off your wedding; you and your Idiletta can wait a spell."

"But just consider, Beppo—the marriage guests are invited, the macaroni is already on the boil, and I must have those shoes."

"Now," thought Beppo, "I have long had a grudge against this Tito; his shoes are almost ready, and maybe I may get a carlin more for them by holding them back;" and, not answering a word, he went on with his work.

"Look, now," said Tito, and he unbound the scarf that encircled his waist. "here are the ten carlins for them." Beppo leaned his head out of the lattice, and saw a gold ducat among the silver pieces. His cupidity was instantly aroused. Tito went on: "I am a richer man than I was yesterday, and I have no objection to add a carlin more, just for the pleasure of seeing my new buckles on them."

"A richer man! So I see, Tito. Eleven carlins is not half what they are worth."

"Beppo, listen: in addition, when the fruit season comes, you shall have a basket of melons, and just as many figs as you can carry; and as to mulberries, why——"

"Goodness gracious, how you promise!" interrupted the cobbler, with a smile of derision. "Whose garden is to suffer, or has Tito, the vagabond, become governor of the province?"

"Most skilful and greatest of shoemakers, I have had a stroke of good fortune; the biggest prize in the lottery is nothing to my luck. Just listen to me. I, Tito, am going to be a man pretty well-to-do in the world. My mother—as all the village knows—when I was an infant went to Naples, and there became nurse in a noble family.

"Last night, as I was deeply immersed in thought, calculating whether I could afford cheese with my to-day's macaroni, a great lackey, all bedecked with gold, calls me by name, and says his master anxiously awaits my coming at the hotel, and begs me to follow him. I was dumb with surprise, but in I went.

"In the handsomest room in the house I found a host of gentlemen, all equipped for the chase; and one of them, nobler and finer than the rest, with a royal decoration in his button-hole, suddenly rises, seizes me around the neck, and introduces me to the company as his foster-brother. He asked questions about me and my poor mother, and shed tears when he heard of her death, and, giving me a piece of gold, bade me have masses said for the repose of her soul. I told him that I was going to be married, and that Idiletta was the dearest, prettiest, sweetest——"

"Umph!" enviously interposed Beppo, jerking his shoulders on a level with his ears. "And so ended the affair?"

"No," joyfully sang out Tito, slinging his cap up in the air. "My foster-brother, besides a handful of gold, gave me a broad slice of land, just over the hill there. Hurra! I shall grow my own figs and melons, and won't I build me a house, and have a long-eared donkey, blessed be all the saints! And now," here Tito held up for want of breath, "nothing is wanting to complete my happiness but those shoes; but if I do not have them in an hour," here, with true Italian versatility of character, Tito's voice and face were plunged in the deepest abyss of melancholy, "I shall be the most wretched of men."

Beppo was silent, and thus he mused: "Twenty minutes will finish Tito's shoes. This foster-brother has so overwhelmed this beggar, Tito, with joy, that the little wit the dog had has all left him. He is going to have a donkey and a wife! This rascally Tito is to be raised to the very tip-top of happiness—is he? Well, he must afford to pay for his marriage shoes. This foster-brother has done all this for Tito.

"Now I, Beppo, am nothing more than a poor cobbler, and can by no means pretend to have the power of this foster-brother—oh, no! not in the least—but still, if in my small way I, Beppo, can do anything to make him miserable, I, too, will have shown some power, though of rather a different sort. A basket of figs and a carlin more! the mean rascal! Let him say ten carlins more, five baskets of figs, and perhaps I will let him have them; for I have him at my mercy now."

"Well, Beppo, answer quickly," gasped out Tito, as if life or death were at stake.

"You may, perhaps, have them to-day; they are commenced, and I might perhaps finish them, provided I was properly paid for them. I am overrun with business. I am now mending Padre Alessandrino's shoes."

"Why, Padre Alessandrino is to marry us."

"Exactly. Now, if I should work at your shoes, the good padre's would not be finished, and the Church"—here the hypocrite crossed himself—"the blessed Church calls for first obedience. Now, Tito, would you have his holiness go to mass with his toe out or with his heel run down? Would you, sacrilegious dog?"

Here was a quandary for Tito, and there was logic in it.

"But," added Beppo, "if you will give me ten carlins more and ten baskets of figs, why then, perhaps——"

"I cannot afford it. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Wear your old ones," tauntingly said Beppo.

"Why poke fun at me? You know I have gone barefoot ever since I was born!"

"Cannot help that, signor landholder: if you have gone so long in natural silk stockings, hop about so a trifle longer. My terms are ten carlins more and in a half-hour I shall ask twenty; so make up your mind, and if you have nothing better to offer, the sooner you get out of my sunlight the better;" and with this Beppo closed the lattice with a slam, through which Tito's handsome face had been peering like a Titian in a rustic frame. Tito's steps were heard slowly moving away, and Beppo resumed his hammer and in an audible tone thus talked to himself:

'Confound his luck! why should this Tito swim in a sea of gold? This Idiletta! who does she take me for, to turn up her nose at Beppo and jump at Tito? It is true, I never demeaned myself by asking her to have me. She is comely, but has not a copper in the world. I do not care about her, though she might have waited, if only through politeness, to see what my intentions were, and whether I had made a choice.

"To the evil one with my trade! If I could only leave a sharp nail in the heel of every shoe I cobbled, how I would glory in it; it is a satisfaction, however, to know that the leather I put in them is not worth a straw. Tito will give me no more? We shall see. The sun has already passed my window, and it must be noon, and Tito will have to make a higher bid—fifteen carlins more at the very lowest—he can afford it. Even suppose they do not get married to-day, they will have to to-morrow or the next day, and this time a year hence they will not perceive it; for may I be hanged if he gets his shoes to-day without well paying for them."

Just then a supplicating knock was heard at the window. "Ah," said Beppo, never budging, "I thought as much; he will pay for them; let him knock again."

"Beppo, it is Tito; open! open!" Beppo, with feigned amazement, opened the window, and there stood Tito, the picture of despondency. "In the name of all the saints, my shoes!" he said.

"I told you an hour ago that you must pay for them. I want fifteen carlins now."

"Let me implore you."

"Fifteen carlins!"

"I can give nothing more.'

"Well, then, off with you!"

"But you promised me the shoes!"

"I do not care a wax-end if I did; circumstances alter cases. He! he! Wear one of your Idiletta's—her feet are big enough!"

"I am not to have the shoes, then?"

"No; if you want them to-day at noon—and it wants just twenty minutes of it—I must be paid a carlin the minute. Perhaps somebody else in the village will make 'em in time." Beppo relied on being the only shoemaker in the place.

"Mother of mercies, what shall I do—o—o!" blubbered Tito, in a paroxysm of grief.

"Stop your bellowing, you sucking calf, and hand over the money, or do without them."

"Well, then," suddenly answered Tito, with a smile, and as cool as an iced lemonade, "I will not want them at all, not even for a gift."

"What!" said Beppo, between his teeth. "Well, do without them; they shall shoe your betters."

"I have not the least doubt of it," added Tito very quietly, as he drew from under his jacket a pair of dancing pumps, on which sparkled the biggest possible kind of buckles. "See, look, Beppo, how these fit!" and he put one on; "they fit like the skin to a grape, and you could not make such to save your soul. Now addio, addio—I bear no malice. Come to the wedding and welcome—we are going to have such a dance—here is a new step in the tarantella," and here Tito cut a pigeon-wing, one foot bare and the other elegantly shod. "By the way, just think of it; we spend to-morrow at Naples, the first day of the honeymoon—won't we go into the Ravioli, lighten the wine-flask, and see Polichinello! I am mad with joy—addio! addio!" and away he bounded like a deer.

Beppo stood stock-still.

"This foster-brother has given him a pair of cast-off slippers; may they give him the gout——" here he brought down the hammer on his thumb with an awful whack, and, with a yell, threw it from him. The implement described a somersault or so, pitched into the middle of his water vase, shivering it to pieces, and then, with a ricochet, went smashing through the lattice. "Just my luck! They are going to Naples, Tito and Idiletta, are they? May Vesuvius spit lava on them! By the holy St. Crispin, I will go there, too—yes, with his very shoes, and just for spite I'll work at them this very minute, not that the padre's are finished," and saying this, he went to work, and presently Tito's shoes were done.

Beppo's surmise about Tito's shoes was correct. Tito, chagrined at the idea of being married without shoes, had sought his patron, who instantly presented him with a pair of his own.

Tito told the story of his distress and the cupidity of the cobbler with inimitable skill. His story was listened to by all the gentlemen with exceeding gravity. Now it happened that Tito's patron was president, and the rest of the company members, of a celebrated club that then existed in Naples, and what they did I will now tell you.

• • • • • •

By sunrise next morning Beppo took his shoes, tied the thongs together, slung them over his stick, and trudged away toward Naples.

The village was just getting hid behind a vine-clad hill, when past flew the happy Tito with the blushing Idiletta in a *coniage*, racing away as fast as the horse could tear. They lovingly kissed their hands to him, threw him a flower and in a moment were lost in a cloud of dust.

"Maladetta!" howled out Beppo after them, as he ground the flower in the dust. "May the axle-tree split, and may you break your necks in the ditch! No matter, it is but ten miles to Naples and I shall get there as soon as they. Who are they that they should ride when their betters walk? In Naples I shall sell these shoes, and, let me see, I will have a polenta and a flask of Capri."

"Hulloa!" sang out a labourer, engaged in making a ditch by the roadside. "I say, my young man, who are those two pretty people driving past so pleasantly?"

"Who? A stupid fellow, with his wife; may they be jolted to jelly!"

"Ah?" said the man, digging away.

"Yes," added Beppo, his mouth full of venom, "she is a slattern, but a proper match for a thief like her husband."

"Well, appearances are deceptive; one never can tell what people really are. Now, you," went on to say the labourer, as he rested on his spade, "look like a shoemaker, though, from what is hanging from your stick there, one might think——'

"What?" inquired Beppo.

"Why, you see, if you take my advice, you won't expose yourself in that way; the game laws, you know, are very strict——"

"What, under heavens, are you driving at?"

"Why, you see," said the man, with a cunning look, "a pair of birds like those, I know, are tempting. What splendid fellows!—only take care the gamekeepers don't ask you where you got them."

"You are mad!" cried Beppo, giving him a look of disdain, as he marched along, with his shoes dangling from his stick.

On he went a mile, until he met a man leading an ass, which bore huge baskets full of chickens and turkeys. With a loud "whoa!" the man stopped the beast, and thus accosted the astonished Beppo:

"I say, friend, have you a mind to sell those birds there? I'll give you the pick of a turkey or a pair of fat chickens for them. You are a lucky fellow to have the first of the season; take 'em to the palace and offer them to the cook, and you will get your own price for them—they always buy the first birds. If I was going to Naples, I should not mind giving you forty carlins for that pair. Success to you," and with this, jerking the ass, he went on his way.

Stock-still stood Beppo in amazement, his mouth wide open. "Strange!—wonderful! To meet two crazy people, one after the other—what can it portend? Oh, St. Jeromio keep the evil eye from me!"

On he went, until the road descended to the bottom of a pleasant valley. At the base of the hill, Beppo saw a travelling carriage, which two stout horses were slowly dragging up the hill. As they came leisurely by, Beppo saw two gentlemen inside, and when they were almost opposite, he heard one of them say to the other:

"There now, talk to me about your bustards or your mallards. Nonsense! There is a pair of pheasants worth more than all the beccaficos and ortolans in the world. Give me one of those well larded, and basted with oil, and done brown to a turn, and I declare it to be a morsel fit for a king. Hulloa! Postilion, stop your horses! Young man, what do you want for those pheasants?"

Beppo heard no more, but, taking to his heels, ran down the hill; a big stone caught his foot, and he rolled on the ground. "Can I be bewitched," roared the cobbler, looking round, as he gave a sidelong glance at his shoes, "or am I drunk? Everybody calls my shoes pheasants! Am I sunstruck?" Here he paused, rubbed his eyes, and gazed affrighted at his shoes. "It is impossible, and yet everybody says so!" He bathed his head in the running brook, and recovering from his bruises, went slowly along, but by no means comfortably.

A latent, unaccountable uneasiness had hold of him. Gradually his pace slackened, his knees trembled, and great drops of perspiration streamed down his face. "Pheasants!" he exclaimed; "are they pheasants? Am I Beppo, or somebody else?" He looked anxiously round for someone to testify to his identity. "St. Jeromio help me—I wear your medal round my neck!" and he felt for it in his breast. It was there, and he mechanically repeated an *Ave*, looking cautiously all about him. He started. A hundred feet further on, under an olive-tree, lay a little child, sound asleep. He walked thoughtfully towards it, his *Ave* half finished.

Suddenly, with one of those strange mental efforts, his mind was made up—the child must determine the subject. With a cross face and flashing eye, he sprang at the child, gave it a brutal shake, and, holding in one hand the shoes, and in the other his uplifted stick, he roared out—"You beggarly little imp, what are these? Tell me truly, or I will break every bone in your body."

The child rubbed its sleepy eyes—then shouted, without a moment's hesitation, "Pheasants! pheasants!"

"Goodness!" exclaimed Beppo, "is the saying true, that children and fools speak the truth?" and instantly, from a state of suspense, he sprang, at one bound, to the certainty that his shoes were pheasants.

"They are pheasants—rather of the black breed, but pheasants they must be."

"Of course they are," cried the child, "and a finer pair of birds I never saw."

"What are they worth?"

"Seventy-five carlins to the poorest country huckster, and in Naples he could sell them at double that price."

"You are a clever little fellow," sweetly replied Beppo; "and now, little dear, go on with your nap. Viva!" exultingly cried the cobbler, as he took the high road. "Luck has come to more people than to Tito. There must be some saint who has taken me under his special protection. Here am I, possessor of a splendid pair of pheasants (how I can't exactly say) worth one hundred and fifty carlins, at the lowest estimation."

Just then a setter-dog bounded across the road, and a sportsman emerged from a neighbouring thicket.

"Here, Fido! here," cried the hunter, and in ran the dog. "Down," said the master, and the animal crouched at his feet. "I say, countryman, where on earth did you get those pheasants? What a brace! Here have I been beating this cover ever since sunrise, and without a single shot. I hate to go home with an empty gamebag, and if you have a mind to sell, say the word. Will two hundred carlins buy them?"

"No," answered Beppo, "I have been offered two hundred and fifty for them."

"Well, they are dirt cheap at that; at Naples you may get twice that for them. What a brace of birds—what splendid tails!" and here he stroked down the shoes; his dog commenced a series of eccentric jumps at them. "Look, now, at that dog; there is a nose for you; knows them right off. Well, good-day to you; I am sorry I have not money enough about me to buy them; good-bye; I wish you luck!" and away went hunter and dog.

"Per Bacco! who does this fellow take me for, with his offer; my birds are not for such poor mouths as his. Strange how the dog knew them. Why shouldn't he?—it is his nature. Zounds! how heavy they are! But thank gracious, there is Naples, and in five minutes I shall be in the market-place."

With this he hurried on, never heeding a priest, a soldier, and a water-carrier, who all stopped and admired his golden pheasants.

He soon was in the suburbs, elbowing his way through the motley crowd, but was somewhat surprised that no one took any notice of his precious game. "Ah," said he, "these poor beggars don't know a golden pheasant from a goose; wait until I get on the plaza." Passing through a narrow street, Beppo heard the sound of a tambourine, and a merry laugh chiming to it. Presently two people, arm-in-arm, leaned over the balcony, and kissed their hands to him; it was Tito and Idiletta.

"Come up, come up," cried Tito; "this is the place; we are just going to have a dance."

"To the evil one with you," answered Beppo, "crow of a Tito and cat of an Idiletta. I suppose you are the only ones who can enjoy themselves in Naples. See! look! I have here," and he shook his stick, with the shoes dangling on them, "what will let me buy you and your Idiletta."

"They are only a pair of——" Here the speech was interrupted by Tito's pretty wife, who, giving him a loud kiss, playfully pulled him in at the window.

Beppo got to the grand plaza, which was thronged, for it was market day. He looked round for a place, and spying an empty spot between a fish-woman and a vegetable vendor, insinuated himself into the vacant space. Taking the shoes from off his stick, and carefully blowing off the dust from them, he exposed them to view. No one as much as took notice of him. He was slightly disappointed; so, crowding before his two neighbours, he commenced yelling at the top of his voice:—

"Pheasants — golden pheasant! Who will buy? Who wants 'em?"

"Stop your noise!" growled the fish-woman.

"Stop my noise? I had better stop my nose, for your fish smell most disagreeable. Pheasants! pheasants!"

"I say, you idiot, what on earth are you howling? Where do you see any pheasants?" inquired the cabbage-seller.

"Pheasants!" roared out Beppo, not heeding her.

Some boys came up who stared in amazement at Beppo, holding his shoes high over their heads. "Pepe! Pepe! a lark! a man with an old pair of shoes, who says they are pheasants. I say, Aunty Cabbage, is not he——" and here the urchin made that particular Italian sign, which consists in touching the forehead with the forefinger, and giving the hand a wag or so, which is the Neapolitan for crazy.

"Pheasants! golden, golden!" kept on Beppo.

"Shoes! an old pair of shoes!" interrupted the cabbage-woman. "Zerlina, that man is a lunatic."

"You lie, you scorpion! it is you who are mad," retorted Beppo.

"Liar yourself!" responded Zerlina, throwing a slice of tunny-fish at him.

"A fight! a row! a crazy man!" sang out the assembled crowd. Somebody threw a rotten melon, and a bombardment of spoiled vegetables followed. Beppo, foaming with rage, laid about him with his stick; the two women closed with him, and in a twinkling he was soused in the fountain.

"Police! police!" cried the crowd; "a crazy man just broken loose from the mad-house! help! murder! down with him!"

Poor Beppo was in the water; every time his head appeared, as quickly was it pushed under again. Up came the sbirri. "What does all this mean, you blackguard, kicking up a fuss in the market place? This is no place to sell shoes!" and the police pulled the cobbler out of the water by the ears.

"I was selling my pheasants," cried Beppo—his mouth full of slime—not a bit cooled by the immersion.

"Signor policeman, he is mad—crazy as a hare," cried the women.

"Off with him," yelled the people. Beppo was kicked and pommelled by every one who could get a chance at him, and at last—more dead than alive—was lugged to the guard-house.

• • • • •

That night his head was shaved, and he was copiously bled. Next morning, the head magistrate was on the point of sending him to the mad-house, when in the nick of time came a note to the committing magistrate which read as follows:—

EXCELLENZA, ETC., ETC., ETC.:

The club of which you were once a most useful member send you the following, which please notice. Beppo, the shoemaker, broke his word with his customer, through envy and jealousy, at the same time with the desire of extorting money from him. The club, happening to hear of the circumstance, determined to punish Beppo, and so arranged it that every one from Beppo's village to Naples vowed his shoes were pheasants, and Beppo believed them. We regret that Beppo was a greater fool than we took him for. Enclosed please find ten carlins, which present to Beppo on our part, as the original price for his shoes.

We are, Excellenza,
With much respect,
THE MEZZO-MATTI.

Beppo was sent home, a wiser man. His disposition was much sweetened, though the villagers declared that for a long time he was quite shaken as to his understanding.

"WHO COMES HERE?"

"HALT! Who comes here?"

"Friends with the countersign."

"Advance one and give the countersign!"

It was the relief going the rounds to change the pickets, and I was dropped out at post No. 7. We had fought Lee all day long on the strangest battle-field of the whole war—in the Wilderness. From right to left flank, from front to rear, we were hemmed in by forest and thicket. There were swamps in which lizards and serpents lurked, thickets in which the coy whippoorwill built its nest, dense spots of forest which seemed never to have echoed the ring of the woodman's axe.

We had fought from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, from glade to glade, pushing back the grey lines here, baffled and compelled to give ground at other points. Lee's lines barred the way. Never a man in his whole army whose musket-barrel was not hot that day. Never a man who did not feel that he was fighting for the life of the Confederacy.

How the forest shook and trembled as the great guns sent their deadly missiles crashing through the foliage! How the thickets blazed up in flames, the severed limbs crashed down, the sunny glades turned dark as night with the powder-smoke settling over them! The dead outnumbered the bushes; the wounded wailed and cried as I never heard them before or after. There was something so sombre—so gruesome—so unearthly in fighting a foe unseen in the semi-darkness that the shouting and imprecations usually heard in the lines gave place to silence and pale faces.

Darkness had come at last and the roar of battle had died away to a low growl. Grant had failed to drive Lee. We knew that from flank to flank. If he could not force a passage through those grey lines he could flank them. Before the sun went down we knew that he would do it. It was not yet night when the movement began, but my division would be one of the last to move, and we must hold our ground and prevent the Confederates from discovering what was taking place. It was a curious coincidence of war that Lee was also moving by the flank, both armies marching in parallel lines from a battle-field which had yielded neither victory nor defeat to either side.

Post No. 7 was under a large tree on the edge of a thicket. To the south there was a strip of open ground, then a thicket, then an old field, in which stood a log cabin. It was a lonely place, well away from the camps, the dead, and the dying, but I was glad to be alone. All along the lines there was a growling of musketry; but this was but a bluff—a bit of acting to cover the real design. I had been nearly an hour on the post without anything happening to alarm me, when I heard a person moving in the thicket across the open strip.

Was it a person? Riderless horses had galloped about that day almost without number; this might be one which had found shelter in that thicket.

Rustle! rustle! Step! step!

It was a cautious movement. Whoever it was hoped to reach me without discovery, but there were dead leaves under foot and the thicket was dense. A hare could not have moved without betraying its presence.

Rustle! Rustle!

Kneeling down so as to see under the darkness, as it were, I suddenly made out a black object against the dark background. It is neither horse nor mule; it is a human being. A scout from the enemy's picket post, only a quarter of a mile away? A wounded man hobbling about to find succour? one of our own scouts returning?

"Who comes here?"

There is a silence for fifteen seconds and then a woman's voice answers:

"I can't find the place! It is so dark I can't find the place!"

Ay! it was a woman's voice, and it had a sob in it, too. A woman there in the darkness between the hostile lines—with powder-smoke still in the air, with stray bullets darting through the thickets with a whizz, as of some great insect stirred to anger!

"Who comes here?"

"I wish it wasn't so dark! I am so tired—so very, very tired!"

And then she came across the open strip towards me, making no stop, never hesitating, walking straight up to me, as if she could see as well by night as in the sunshine of day.

"I can't find the place!" she sobbed as she came to a stop within arm's length.

"Good God, woman! but what are you doing here?" I gasped, almost terrified at her presence.

"See! see!" she replied, holding a bundle out towards me. "One time I saw a beautiful spot in the woods, and said to myself that if he died I would bury him there, but I can't find it—I can't find it!"

"What is it, woman? What have you got there?"

"See! see! Don't be afraid. He's dead! He can't speak or move. Take him!"

She put a bundle into my arms and I cried out and let fall my musket. It was the body of a baby about a year and a half old. Dead? Yes! Dead from a cruel bullet which had pierced its little body and left a great wound which looked horrible to me in the dim light! Dead and cold and bathed in its own blood—dead for hours! And when I reached out and touched the shawl or wrap worn by the mother my fingers burned at the feel of blood!

"I have carried him such a long, long way," she moaned, "and I have seen so many dead men and heard so many guns! You'll help me, won't you—help me to find the place and bury poor baby?"

"Was it your baby? Did you live in the cabin beyond the thicket?" I asked, still holding the little corpse.

"He was so happy!" she said as she patted the little bare head with a motherly hand. "And I was so happy, too! He won't never laugh and crow again, will he? I've got to find that beautiful place and bury him haven't I? And you'll help me; yes, I know you will.

She had lost her mind. Think of it—an insane mother wandering over a bloody battle-field with her dead child in her arms. She had but one idea—to bury it in a beautiful dell which she had once visited—a dell in which Federal or Confederate were doubtless then burying their own dead.

I knew not what to do. I could not leave my post and I did not want her to go wandering further. I was trying to soothe and quiet the woman when she suddenly cried out:—

"Ah! it is not so dark now and I can find the place. I'll go on ahead and dig the grave and do you follow on with baby. Poor baby! He won't know that he is buried, will he? I can find the place and you——"

"Come back! come back!" I called to her as she fled away in the darkness, but she was two hundred feet away as she answered me:—

"I'll find the place! Poor, poor baby!"

And when the relief came I told the story and pointed to the bundle resting on the ground beside me.

"God pity her!" whispered the sergeant as he lifted his cap.

"God pity her!" echoed all the others as they stood uncovered around the poor little corpse.

Time meant human lives that night. Grant was moving by the flank; Lee was moving by the flank to match him. The morrow was to witness more slaughter—make thousands of widows and orphans.

"Dig here!" said the sergeant and with our bayonets we scooped out a shallow grave in scarcely more than a minute's time.

"Carefully, now! Poor little thing! Now fill in! That will do. God knows where it lies. Fall in—forward, march!"

And yet men write of the glory of war!

A PHANTOM AT CHESS.

It was long ago in India. I was connected with the British Press as war correspondent, and also, to some extent, with the Government.

I was in Bombay, engaged upon a secret Government commission, and was being entertained by a wealthy native, occupying a two-storey bungalow in the most aristocratic quarter of Malabar Hill. He was entirely ignorant, however, concerning my mission, as my only hope of success lay in absolute secrecy.

My own room was as secluded as possible. It was a storey above the ground, with a single window opening upon an extensive garden behind the house. A single door opened upon the inner corridor, and, as a precaution, while I was in the room I always kept the door securely bolted. The room was a luxury of Oriental magnificence, but business made such constant demands upon my time that I poorly appreciated its temptations to ease.

One night there remains as vividly upon my mind as though it were but four-and-twenty hours ago. The moon shone as it shines only in India. The night wind from the sea came in a tempting breeze through the window, scented by the grove of sweet limes and almonds through which it had passed on the way.

Just under the window was an open space of about three hundred feet, with the proverbial bathing pool in the centre. It was so light that I could even see the night moths fluttering about the fountain.

Farther away, in the outskirts of the grove, the fireflies were darting, and the night was so still that I could not only hear the flapping wings of the bats in the grove and the rustle of the plaintain leaves, but the musical groans of some belated boatmen as they pulled for the shore from some fishing trip down the harbour.

Over the grove I could see the moonlight lying like a sheet of burnished silver upon the subtle undulations of the beautiful bay—the broad, blue harbour of Bombay.

For several hours I had been working upon a weekly report of what had thus far proved a thoroughly unsuccessful mission. I know of nothing more vexing and exhausting than making up such a report, and, thoroughly tired, I placed the report in an official envelope and carefully sealed but did not address it. Then I left the precious inlaid ebony writing-table and turned to the window.

How long I stood there watching the scene just described I do not know. It was peculiarly quieting after my nervous employment. I was just beginning to think of the tempting couch under its cloud of gauze drapery at the opposite end of the room, when I heard the cry of the night watchman, in front of the house, announcing that the clocks were striking twelve and that he was wide awake.

It was midnight. What a glorious night! Why could it not always be midnight? Why should it soon be followed by a sultry, suffocating Bombay day?

Midnight! Hark! There was the distant cry of the watchman away down by the old fort. Who would have thought that a human voice could be heard so far off? He, too, was saying that it was midnight.

Had the breeze suddenly grown colder? Something like a shiver ran down my back. My hands were icy cold. A moment before I was drowsily thinking of the shortest possible way of placing myself upon that tempting couch. Now I was suddenly restless and undeniably nervous. I lit a cigarette to quiet myself, but stood with my face intently towards the window.

For some unaccountable reason I did not dare to turn about. The room behind me was as still as death. What was the matter? Shiver after shiver crept along my back. Was it simply the fact that it was midnight? Was it the premonition of a fever? Was some one creeping up behind me? Nonsense! I shuddered, and with a startled motion, in spite of my effort to be composed, threw the cigarette out of the window and turned sharply about.

The swing lamp moved slowly in the breeze, but the room was empty. Of course I was alone. Yet I knew very well that I was not alone.

I tried to walk slowly across the room, but my feet moved with sudden jerks. Despising myself for doing it, I cast a searching glance into every corner. I even tried the door, though I could see with my eyes that it was bolted, and hear the heavy breathing of my servant asleep on the rug outside. I lifted the gauze about the couch, though I could see through it without. There was not a place in the room where a cat could have hidden. There was not a living creature the size of a mouse in the room, and yet I knew I was not alone.

I am no spiritualist. I know as little as possible, for a man of the world, about the occult and the phantasmagoric theories. I am prone—too prone, perhaps—to believe in what I see and hear, and not to believe in what I do not see and hear. Upon this occasion, however, I saw nothing, heard nothing, and yet, shivering and—I confess it—thoroughly frightened, I believed, I absolutely *knew* that there was someone beside myself in that room.

I was on the point of going to the door and waking my servant that he might come in and keep me company. Nothing but shame prevented me. I drew a light divan and a carved ivory table to the centre of the room, lit a taper held in the mouth of a grim bronze dragon, the only object upon the table, and, throwing myself upon the divan, took up the evening paper.

Midnight! The word kept ringing in my ears. The rustle of the paper startled me. I fully realised the absurdity of my position, and laughed at myself as I threw the paper on the floor, but it was exquisitely painful and wholly beyond my control. Remembering my favourite hookah, I determined to try an Oriental smoke, sure that if anything could quiet my nerves that would do it.

The bowl was empty. The boy had forgotten to fill it. Had it not been a longer walk to the door than to the table where the tobacco was kept, I should have made the empty hookah an excuse for calling the sleeping rascal. As it was, I was literally afraid to cross the room again. It was only half as far to the table. I cast a quick glance all about the room, then hurriedly rose, reached the table, took up the tobacco case, and turned about.

Let me say a word in justice to myself. Here, in my quiet, English home, I am relating an actual incident, as far as I can make it from being sensational—a simple experience through which I certainly passed when assuredly I was wide awake and as little inclined to accept the mysterious as any one ever was in all his life. That is all that I can say for myself. You may take it—you will take it just as it pleases you.

As I turned about, the divan from which I had just risen was occupied by as handsome a Persian as ever I saw. He was lying there—a perfect picture of Oriental ease—quietly examining the bronze dragon holding the lighted taper.

My back had not been turned four seconds, yet he was not only there, he was also contentedly smoking my hookah. The bowl was empty and cold when I left the divan, and strong lungs, with a good light, require several seconds, at the least, to produce any appreciable smoke from a Hindoo hookah, yet about the Persian's head there floated little wreaths of curling smoke as though he had been smoking for half an hour.

There was nothing frightful about him. He was as delicate as a boy. I was much less nervous than I had been five minutes before and, after the first shock I stood for a minute, at least, silently surveying my unceremonious guest, assuring myself that I was awake, running through a little sum in mental arithmetic to test the action of my mind, and then turning again to consider what was evidently a most astonishing reality upon my divan.

He was surely a Persian of the Persians. His mass of black hair was surmounted by the garnet fez of the aristocracy. His dress was costly and perfect. With one delicate hand he held the hookah stem to his lips; with the other he daintily touched the bronze dragon. One pearl of enormous size was held by a delicate silver setting upon his finger.

With a sigh, he left off his examination, and, speaking in faultless English, said:

"'Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay!' Here is the god of my fathers, holding a candle for a degenerate infidel to read his evening paper." Then, as though we had already been spending a long evening together, he added: "Come, let us have a game of cards, to kill, if we can, this unbearable monotony."

There was something so commonplace about it that I almost forgot the mystery and replied as I would upon any other occasion: "You Persians have too many tricks at cards. I am not fond of being beaten in that way."

He leaned back wearily upon the divan, blew a little wreath of smoke through a larger one, and languidly asked: "Are the only tricks you understand those of a Government spy?"

I started and doubtless turned pale. My ostensible profession was one of war correspondent. The success which I had hitherto met with as a Government detective had been greatly due to the fact that except the Viceroy, his secretary, and the chief of the police department not a living soul knew of my connection with that business. In the present case such knowledge, especially in the hands of a native, would utterly frustrate the end. It was not a pleasant discovery, but gathering myself together, I endeavoured to ignore his insinuation, and replied:

"Chess is a better game and is the pride of you Persians. I would beat you at a game of chess if I had the men and board."

"One game is as good as another," he muttered languidly. "Sit down and have a game of chess."

I could not take my eyes from the beautiful pearl upon his slender hand as he motioned me to a chair on the opposite side of the table.

It was less than ten minutes before that I had drawn that divan and table into the centre of the room. I know that they stood alone there. The chair, which I now noticed for the first time, was the only one of its kind in the room. It was of curious construction, as much like an English chair as anything to be found in an Oriental home, and had been placed in the room by my courteous host in deference to my English blood. It invariably stood at the head of my bed, which was in the furthest corner of the apartment. I had never used it and never touched it in my life. More than that, from the moment when I rose from the divan, I had been directly between the divan and the bed.

I was determined not to show my astonishment, and, anxious to convince myself that the chair was a reality, without a moment's hesitation I deliberately seated myself.

There was no doubt about the chair, but a new surprise awaited me. The Persian lay at length upon the divan, carelessly blowing wreaths of smoke directly upward. He could not have brought his hand within two feet of the table since the time he had thrown himself back upon the divan, before I suggested a game of chess. Indeed, he had not moved except to motion me to a chair.

The table was a light bamboo frame, supporting a carved ivory top. I noticed that the Persian's eye rested constantly upon me, but not intently. The lids dropped over them as though it required all his energy to keep him awake. For my own eyes, except for an occasional glance, on what I could see without looking directly, I could not take them from that great beautiful pearl. Now, however, drawing my chair to the table, I noticed an elaborate chess-board laid upon the table, and beside it a box of exquisitely-carved chess-men, in white and stained ivory.

Rousing a little, the Persian remarked, with evident disgust: "The white man is as slow as life's monotony. Let us begin the game. I long to see the spasm of joy that will come into your marble face when you have vanquished me. Victory—victory is the only incident that thrills the English heart with joy."

With a sigh, he raised himself upon one elbow and, gracefully emptying the men upon the board, began arranging them. That done, he looked up, and with utter indifference asked: "What are the stakes?"

I took refuge in bravado and sullenly replied: "Name your own and I will double them against you."

He smiled as he replied with the utmost courtesy: "You seem to trust your skill, and it makes me timid. Till we know upon what we are venturing fortunes, let us make a mild wager. Let it be something novel and amusing, instead of expensive. Put it that when you have won you shall ask a favour of me and I must grant it, or that if by any accident, the victory should rest with me, the favour be reversed.

"That would depend upon what you asked," I replied, doubtfully. "And, as for me, there is no favour that I can ask of you."

He smiled impatiently, and responded: "Englishmen are bold as this bronze dragon when they hold the candle in their jaws. Let me help you to see with those blind eyes, and then note how voraciously you will devour my wager. If you win nay, you have said it, you will win. Well, *when* you win, think of the two months you have spent in trying to locate the counterfeit rupee stamp upon Mobarak, the Ethiopian. Do not let me vex you. We are quite alone. Think of the sealed packet lying there upon your writing-desk, in which you have told the Viceroy but the tithe of truth when you say that your progress has been slow, difficult and doubtful. Do not let me disturb you so. I am speaking to no ear but yours. If you fail, as you surely will, at present, you will have to leave India in disgrace. If you succeed, as you surely can, you may ask and receive what you will from the Government.

"Your sluggish instinct, with unusual cunning for a white man, has fixed upon Mobarak, but Mobarak has more shrewdness in his one black skin than could be distilled from every drop of English blood in India. Why should my poor words trouble you? Are we not members one of another? Can the ear hear and not acquaint the eye? Were you so dull of comprehension as to believe that you could live and move and no one know your occupation? Had I supposed your blindness prided itself on such a hope I would not have obliterated the stupid self-esteem. I only thought to suggest to you that when you had vanquished me, you ask, as a favour, of one from whom you say that there is nothing you can ask, that he lift you from disgrace to victory by opening Mobarak's secret and showing you the rupee stamp."

"You know it!" I cried, springing to my feet.

The smile had not time to leave his lips when he continued: "But we have not yet begun the game. Perhaps you have over-estimated your ability, or by some accident I may win. If you accept the wager let us begin."

Discretion was always my better part of valour, and I replied:

"If you should win?"

He smiled again as he answered: "I hardly know what favour I could ask of you. Nothing for myself, at least. Only this—at five o'clock this coming morning, at the tualo of the temple adjoining yonder grove, there will be a helpless girl, sadly in need of such protection as only one in your position can afford. This is the favour I should ask—that at four o'clock you lie secreted near the tualo. If you fear treachery take a dozen British soldiers with you, only prevent their being seen. If you see nothing that appeals to you within one half-hour, then go your way. If you see what does appeal, then do as you would be done by if the cases were reversed, and you will have performed your pledge to me. There—that is the favour I shall ask if by any possibility I win. May we play the game?"

Without a word I moved my queen's pawn two. The Persian placed his queen's bishop's pawn beside it. To check a game of bravado at the outset, I took it.

The game moved slowly, but every step was in my favour. I had not overestimated my ability at my favourite game. Three times the Persian avoided a checkmate only at a desperate sacrifice. His queen, castle, and knight fell without exchange. Six pawns at long intervals followed, with only one exchange. Then I exchanged a pawn for his black bishop. Yet in every plot that I attempted I felt myself weak and found myself frustrated. I had more than double his strength upon the board, yet it was clearly absorbing every energy to meet the intricate designs which he was constantly

developing. In spite of me the field seemed his. His men fell, but his position did not weaken.

Neither of us spoke from the moment I opened the game. Nearly three hours went by and still we played. I was desperate. With all the strength and all the men, I realised that I was still being driven back at every step. The Persian was half asleep. He was still smoking my hookah. It had not required refilling. He would make his move instantly; then lie again at length upon the divan with his half-closed eyes resting languidly upon me until I had carefully studied and deliberately moved.

My own attention was divided between the incomprehensible board and that incomprehensible pearl.

From the appearance of the board as it stood at the end of three hours I should have said I must be able to check-mate in four moves at most, but study the game as I would I could not find one plot that would force him anywhere. A dozen moves and we had exchanged a bishop and a knight. Still I was helpless. It seemed impossible for him to prolong the game much longer, yet I knew that he was driving me. He was evidently playing only to delay my victory, but his continued success in delaying it enraged me. I was leaning heavily upon the table, nervously encircling the board with both hands. He lay listlessly upon the divan, and sighed with the exertion each time that he rose sufficiently to touch a piece with the tip of his fingers.

After a long pause I made a move. This time the Persian did not rise. He blew a wreath of smoke upward and quietly remarked, "You are playing badly for one who began so well. Your bishop is unguarded. I shall take it with mine, and your king, uncovered, is left in check and mated."

"Your bishop is black" I exclaimed, "and both my bishop and my king are—" I sprang to my feet. They were both on black!

"It is heaven or hades to the Englishman to lose or win," observed the Persian, yawning.

"I have not lost!" I cried, and proceeded to demonstrate the impossibility of my bishop being on black.

"You have a good memory," said the Persian, carelessly. "Mine, too, is good—but for nothing. It is too much exertion to remember anything. You certainly did not change the pieces. Do you think I did?"

The absurdity of such a thing was too evident. I could only answer:

"No."

"An accident," he continued, calmly, still without rising. "You may have jarred the board. You were holding it as though you would have eaten it if possible. Pray arrange the pieces as you feel sure they should have been."

I hesitated. He continued: "An Englishman is rampant after victory, but he is the soul of honour. He would scorn to force me to take an advantage of an incident which he himself would repudiate."

Without a word I rearranged the two pieces.

"Are you fully satisfied that they are all as they should be?" he asked, without looking at the board.

I examined every piece and answered: "I am satisfied."

From where his head lay I am sure that he could not have distinctly seen the position of the men upon the board at all. He was apparently wrapped in luxurious contemplation of the curling clouds from the hookah, yet I felt that through them his drowsy eyes were still resting upon mine. He waited a moment and remarked: "My arm refuses to lift me up again. Will you move my bishop to my king's five?"

"I am checked and mated!" I gasped as I made the move for him and gazed in blank astonishment upon the little board.

"Was it fairly done?" he asked with a sigh.

I studied every piece again and replied, "It was fairly done."

"Then you have lost your wager; but if you prove true to your pledge you will find that in reality you have not lost, but won."

I looked up. The tube of the hookah lay across the divan pillow, where I had left it more than three hours before. I looked about me. The room was empty; empty but for one little wreath of smoke that was curling in and out about itself and gradually fading as it drifted toward the swinging lamp. I sprang to the door. It was securely bolted.

As I turned from it I noticed the chair in its usual position beside the bed. I hurried to the window. Down upon the open space the stately crows were slowly promenading in the first grey light of the morning. Had anyone performed the feat of leaping from the window and crossing the lawn within the last few minutes, they would not have been there. I sounded the walls of my room for a secret door, but there was none. I turned to move the divan and hookah out of the way and was startled to find the bowl of the hookah empty and cold and the water below perfectly fresh and clean. I looked on the table. The chess men and board were gone.

Throwing myself upon the divan I burst into a laugh, exclaiming: "What a fool I have been! There must have been opium in my cigarette. I have been asleep and dreaming! I have——"

What! The taper was sputtering and dying in the dragon's jaws. What was that beneath it on the ivory table. I caught it up. A great, beautiful pearl—a round, perfect, gleaming pearl, set in a slender, silver ring. I looked at my watch. In fifteen minutes it would be four o'clock. I looked at the pearl. I recalled that game of chess. With a queen, two rooks, two knights, a bishop, and six pawns, I had been checkmated by a rook, a bishop, a pawn, and—a phantom.

I had lost a wager. There was no doubt of it.

Taking a revolver from my desk and my hat I went out, through the grove, and stood among the shrubbery close to the open space, in the centre of which was the temple tualo.

In ten minutes a young woman came to bathe. She was alone. Surely she needed nothing. Not a soul was in sight. As she bent over the water I suddenly noticed an almost prostrate figure creeping stealthily towards her. It was a man of giant proportions, but I could not see his face. Nearer and nearer he crept. Whatever his intentions were they were evil. I paused for a moment to consider whether to speak, to warn the girl, to spring from my hiding-place and single-handed attempt to grapple with the fellow, or to shout for help.

Suddenly she looked up, saw him, and uttered one shriek of terror. He sprang upon her with a savage cry and bore her under the water, holding her there with his powerful arms. He was drowning her. At that fatal instant I remembered the pistol, aimed, and fired without a moment's thought, only to be careful not to kill the man.

With a cry of pain he fell writhing in the water. Hurrying forward, I dragged the senseless body of the girl to the bank and then turned towards the man. Fortunately the noise had called others to the scene, for, seeing me, he sprang from the tualo with wonderful energy, and, with the blood flowing from a wound that rendered one arm helpless, he bore me to the ground with the other, and in another moment would doubtless have killed me, when two soldiers dragged him off. I caught one glimpse of his face as he sprang upon me. It was Mobarak, the Ethiopian.

Still savagely growling, he was carried off under arrest. I should find him later. For the moment, being only bruised, I turned my attention to the girl. She had recovered consciousness, and before I left her I had learned enough to know that she was Mobarak's wife She had fled from him because he had threatened to kill her. He had threatened to kill her because she had discovered an opening in the floor of their house, leading into a subterranean chamber. She was bathing before she said her prayers in the temple for the last time. She meant to fly for her life after that, and could hardly understand it when I told her it would be perfectly safe for her to go home.

Before the sun was more than risen I was in that secret chamber with Government officers, the rupee stamp was in my possession, and one of the most perfect plots for counterfeiting that ever vexed a Government was unearthed, all by—what? Our accident?

I do not know. I can offer no explanation, simply because I have none. I claim no credulity from those who do not wish to be credulous. If you do not find this incident of interest, I beg you simply to consider that it was not prepared for you.

I do not know that I played a game of chess that night, though I think I did. I think that I lost a wager, and I know that in proving true to the pledge I made I found that in reality I had not lost, but won.

Beyond this I only know that I still possess a pearl as beautiful as ever lived under Orman's green water, and that it came to me upon the delicate hand of a phantom.

A REMARKABLE PLUM PUDDING.

A VERY remarkable plum pudding was that which in 1718 one James Austin, inventor of the Persian ink powder, caused to be made. He was anxious to give his customers a substantial proof of his gratitude, and so he invited them to the Boar's Head to partake of an immense plum pudding.

This pudding weighed 1,000 lb. It was put into the copper on Monday, May 12th, at the Red Lion Inn, by the Mint, in Southwark, and had to boil fourteen days. From thence it had to be brought to the Swan Tavern, in Fish Street Hill, accompanied by a band of musicians playing "What lumps of pudding my mother gave me!"

One of the instruments was a drum in proportion to the pudding, being 18ft. 2in. in height, and 4ft. in diameter, which was drawn by a device fixed on six asses. Finally the monster pudding was to be divided in St. George's Fields; and apparently its smell was too much for the gluttony of the Londoners. The escort was routed, the pudding taken and devoured, and the whole ceremony brought to an end before Mr. Austin had a chance to regale his customers.

"HE is the best political speaker I ever heard" "Indeed! What arguments did he use?" "Arguments! He didn't use any arguments at all. He abused the other side."

"THE tongue is an unruly member," quoted the Sunday-school teacher.

"Mine is, anyhow," assented Tommy. "I can't keep it from sticking out every time whenever I try to write."

CHROMATOPSEUDOPSIS is the medical term for colour-blindness, and statistics show that men are much more chromatopseudopsically inclined than women. A man invariably succumbs to chromatopseudoptitude when he tries to match a ribbon.

SUNSHINE LAND.

THEY came in sight of a lovely shore,
Yellow as gold in the morning light;
The sun's own colour at noon it wore,
And had faded not at the fall of night;
Clear weather or cloudy—'twas all as one,
The happy hills seemed bathed with the sun;
Its secret the sailors could not understand,
But they called the country Sunshine Land.

What was the secret? A simple thing—
It will make you smile when once you know—
Touched by the tender finger of Spring,
A million blossoms were all aglow;
So many, so many, so small and bright,
They covered the hills with a mantle of light,
And the wild bee hummed and the glad breeze fanned
Through the honeyed fields of Sunshine Land.

If over the sea we two were bound,
What port, dear child, would we choose for ours?
We would sail and sail, till at last we found
This fairy gold of a million flowers.
Yet, darling, we'd find, if at home we stayed,
Of many small joys our pleasures are made;
More than we think—very close at hand
Lie the golden fields of Sunshine Land.

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS TREES.

THE Christmas tree is an ancient feature of the day; older indeed, some have declared, than the day itself—if the bull be permissible. It has its origin in Germany, and German tradition traces it back to the very Garden of Eden and makes it a symbol of the Tree of Knowledge. It is probably a heathen custom, engrafted, as innumerable heathen customs have been, upon the ceremonials of Christendom.

Long before the beginning of the Christian era the Romans in certain festivities made use of pine-trees, the branches of which were laden with little earthenware images sacred to the gods.

Among the ancient Germans, Goths and Scandinavians the advent of the winter solstice was celebrated with great interest, and the chief feature of the occasion was the erection in every house of a fir tree adorned with burning tapers. This tree was first made a part of the Christmas ceremonial by Gregory the Great, doubtless with a view to making the Northern nations feel more at home in the Christian Church.

The mistletoe, which plays so important a part in Christmas festivities, was selected for this honour many centuries ago, before the Christian era. The Northern people found it growing on the holy oaks, and remaining green in winter-time. So they supposed its seeds had fallen from heaven and they held it sacred to Baldur, the Sun-god.

They decorated their homes and their altars with it at Yuletide, and every greeting beneath it was inspired with love and friendship in the name of Allfather Odin's pure and righteous son. Baldur had been put to death through the treachery of dark-hearted Hoedur. But he had arisen to life again. And so the mistletoe, green and full of life when all the trees of the forest seemed dead, was a fitting emblem of him.

It was the Teutons, then, that founded the Christmas festival. The birthday of the Saviour was not celebrated by the early Church, nor does any record of its date appear to have been kept. Century after century passed, and there was no thought of observing such an anniversary.

But at the beginning of the fifth century, the Gauls had come down upon Rome, and the Teutonic influences prevailed. The festival of Yule and the honours paid to Baldur superseded the Roman Saturnalia.

And so the politic Churchmen hit up the happy expedient of commending Christianity to the Northern conquerors by establishing an identity between the festival of Christ and the festival of Baldur.

Nor was Scriptural authority lacking. The words of John the Baptiser were quoted, where, speaking of Christ, he says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So the nativity of Christ was set at December (old style), when the days beginning to increase, and the day of St. John the Baptiser at June 24th, when they beginning to decrease.

The giving of presents has also been pronounced of heathen origin. More than five centuries before the birth of Christ, Servius Tullius instituted at Rome an annual festival to mark the beginning of the new year. On such an occasion an altar was erected in each village, and upon it was placed a box, into which every man, woman, and child was expected to drop a coin, large or small. From this, it may well be supposed, the Christmas box was evolved.

In the Middle Ages every ship setting out on a voyage was commended to the care of some particular saint. A priest at the port of sailing placed on board the vessel a locked box, of which he kept the key. Into this box, through a slit in the lid, the passengers were expected to drop money to pay the priest for interceding with the saint for their safety, and on the return to port the priest unlocked the box and got his money. This money the priest professed to devote to the saying of masses to the Saviour, and the chest was therefore called Christ's Mass Box. So profitable did these boxes become to the clergy that they were ultimately placed in all churches and chapels.

THE BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS.

A CHRISTMAS party, and, no doubt,
A loaded Christmas-tree;
And girls and boys and toys—and noise:
What do they want with me?
And yet her little friendly note
Declares—thrice underlined—
I must not fail. Well, well, I won't!
She's always sweet and kind.

Now let me see. I had not thought
Upon my wardrobe's state:
I must look up my evening clothes—
By Jove! It's rather late
To rummage for a clean white tie
And fish out gloves to match.
Great Scott! my best shirt's at the wash,
And this one needs a patch.

I'll thread a needle—if I can—
(I am the man who brags
Of single blessedness!) and see
If I can't mend these rags.
This thread's too coarse; or else, perhaps,
My needle is too slim.
The light is poor; or it may be
My sight is getting dim.

Why were men's fingers only made
To drag and thump and jerk?
I'm thinking how her little hand
Would get on with this work!
And how she'd smile and bite her thread,
And look so wise and calm,
And—there! I've stabbed my finger through
Oh, what an ass I am!

The clock ticks on. I must make haste,
Since she desires—alas
For those lost opportunities
Our thoughtless youth let pass!
But, as she's single still, who knows,
Some joys we may retrieve,
Perhaps she'll mend up life for me
Before next Christmas Eve.

THE HAUNTED BANJO.

KINLAW had first heard its tinkling tones in the hall of a large hotel. A tall, thin fellow was swinging it back and forth as he strode down to the entrance, dexterously picking out a tune as he did so with the same hand. Jack Kinlaw's attention was attracted by this novel method of evoking music from a banjo, and the unusually clear sound the instrument gave forth pleased his musical ear.

He followed the man to the doorway as he was about stepping forth into the glinting sunlight.

"May I look at that a moment?" he asked, indicating the banjo with a motion of his hand.

The instrument was extended to him—a rather small, handsome thing, its rim closely set with pearls. Kinlaw ran his supple fingers lightly over the strings and said:

"Will you part with it? I have a friend for whom I promised to look up a good banjo."

And still the man did not speak. Jack looked at him with dawning interest. He was perhaps past thirty, sallow and keen-eyed. His clothes were good, although rather behind the prevailing fashion in fit and cut, and he wore steel-rimmed glasses upon his slightly aquiline nose.

He smiled at the younger man's questioning glance, then the smile broadened into a grin that disclosed his glittering white teeth, in strong contrast with the parchment-like skin.

With one lean finger he pointed to his mouth, shook his head, and produced a set of tablets and a pencil. Then Kinlaw saw with horror that his tongue was a mere stump of shrivelled flesh, appearing as if it had been severed from its roots.

"As you perceive, I am unable to speak intelligibly. I can hear you, so go on—ask me what you like. I will reply in this way."

Scribbling this upon the tablets, he handed them to Jack, gazing at him while he read the words with that peculiarly interrogative expression of coutenance which dumb persons often assume.

"I want to buy your banjo," said Kinlaw again. "Will you sell it, and if so what will you take for it?"

"I am willing to sell it if you will give me my price. I paid 1,000 francs for it some years ago in France. I have become attached to it, but you may have it for £10—what I gave for it."

"That is reasonable enough," returned the other. "The tone is unusually pure and true, and these pearls, while not large, are rather numerous. I will take it. My name is John Kinlaw; please give me yours, and I will give you a cheque at once. You don't live here, I suppose?"

"No, my name is Richard Ventries."

Jack produced his cheque-book and wrote the cheque at the cashier's desk, tearing out the leaf and handing it to Ventries.

He remained to write a note after the other had departed. It was to Miss Hilda Garstone, and ran as follows:—

"I have succeeded in finding this banjo, which I send by the messenger. It is a splendid one, I think, and I hope you will be prepared to give me some delightful music when I next come. You know you promised to accept a banjo from me should I find one that I considered really fine-toned. Yours faithfully,

JACK KINLAW."

This note, with the newly purchased banjo, he despatched to its destination, and lighting a cigar left the hotel.

* * * * * *

When next the banjo's strains saluted his ear, it was a few nights later on his entrance into Miss Garstone's drawing-room. She was practicing a little waltz that thrilled him with its music.

He stopped just one instant inside the curtained doorway that he might not interrupt the performance.

A tall lamp shed a rosy glow through its pink shade upon the young woman who was so indefatigably thrumming the banjo. She was a pretty, golden-haired girl, with the darkest brown eyes half hidden under curling black lashes.

For a long time young Kinlaw had been her devotee, and she appeared not wholly indifferent to his homage. To-night he had resolved to put his fate to the touch.

The waltz ended with a medley of sounds, for, glancing up, the player met his intent gaze.

"I did not want to disturb you," he hastened to exclaim, coming forward to take her extended hand. "How delightfully you play!"

"It is this magic banjo that inspires me," was her smiling rejoiner. "I never played on a sweeter instrument of this kind. Just listen to this, Mr. Kinlaw."

She struck into a weird little melody, such as might have been piped by Pan under the oaks of Arcadia. The room was filled with its sweetness.

Kinlaw listened with delight. Her white ringless fingers flashed from one string to another with experienced touch as her left hand pressed the frets. While watching he thought of the emerald ring set with its sparkling diamonds which he had dared to bring with him. How it would shine and glisten on that fair left hand!

Looking up she caught the pre-occupied expression of his eyes. "Of what are you thinking?" she laid aside the banjo to ask.

"Of a ring."

"A ring. Whose may I ask?"

"Did you never hear of the young French nobleman and his ring during St. Bartholomew's massacre?"

"No, tell it to me."

He drew his chair nearer her own beside the fire, leaned upon its broad arm and said:

"It was on the night when King Charles had ordered the Palace of Justice bell to be tolled as the signal for the slaughter of the Huguenots. The name of the young Frenchman I told you of was amongst those who were to be killed, but not so that of the woman he loved.

"It was a fashion among lovers to exchange rings, and when these had done so, each promised the other to return them should their fealty end, smiling the while that such a thing could ever be. Among hundreds of others the young lover was killed, and a rival of his own committed the crime, using the king's edict as a means of ridding himself of a hated enemy.

"The murdered man's lady-love waited long for him to keep a tryst they had made for the following day, and to her there came the suitor she had once discarded, bearing in his hand a small packet wrapped in linen. On opening it she found the finger of her dead lover, with her ring upon it, just as it had been severed from his hand. Faithful until the end, she died broken-hearted two weeks later."

Miss Garstone was shuddering when he finished, her wide eyes fixed upon him.

"How could you tell me such a ghastly thing?" she exclaimed.

"Forgive me," said Kinlaw. "But tell me, could you be as true to a lover?"

"If I possessed one,—yes."

"You know I am your lover. Won't you wear a ring for me, as did the woman in the story?"

To cover her embarrassment she picked up the banjo and softly touched the strings. It seems to Kinlaw that a chill wind swept between them as she did so.

He shook off the feeling and gently placed the instrument out of her reach. Then, taking one of her hands, he held it while she allowed him to slide the emerald ring upon her finger.

When he had bidden her good-bye, that night, he turned back from the curtained entrance to look at the young queen of his love once more. She had approached the fire that blazed on the hearth and was standing beside it, gazing into the heart of a great pine log.

The leaping flames threw their light over the lounge where lay his gift to her; and a strange illusion was produced: two steady blue points of flame seemed hovering over the banjo and the shadow thrown by a curtain near resembled a long hand touching the silent strings.

Startled, he re-entered the room, and on coming nearer saw that the shadows disappeared. One more kiss on his sweetheart's lips dispelled his unaccountable fears, as sunshine banishes the mist.

* * * * * *

The winter moon had risen above the obstructing line of roofs and spires; its light, pale and cold as that of the frosty stars, shone in at Hilda's window, from which she had pushed aside the shrouding curtains. She saw the paths of broad, white light that lay upon the lawn outside.

It was like gazing through a silver veil, for the trees, the fountain, and the dark rows of houses beyond appeared enveloped with shining, infinitesimal particles. The scene was almost weird in the strange light, and the girl turned from it, let the curtain fall across the window, and advanced into her room.

It was warm and cheerful there; the dancing flames of the wood fire reflected their ruddy brightness on the walls, lighting up the far corners of the room.

Sinking into a chair beside the hearth, she drew out the silver pins that held her fair hair in its soft coil, letting the silky tresses slide about her shoulders until the curled ends touched the floor. Then, with hands thrust through them and clasped at the back of her in restful abandon, she gave herself up to delightful imaginings.

The fire's glow was so soothing, her thoughts too pleasant to be disturbing, so it was little wonder that before long her eyelids drooped and she was sound asleep in the depths of the easy-chair.

Were you ever suddenly awakened in the dead of night, when the fire had burned so low that its reflection was but ghostly as it dimly touched the walls? A dozen horrid shadows will stand out from corners where the light fails to penetrate, thrilling you with superstitious terrors.

Hilda came out of her sleep, aroused by the growing coldness of the room. The logs on the fire had burned to coals, glowing red through a drift of flaky ashes. As she had neglected to light the gas, her room was left in semi-darkness.

She shivered and started to her feet, but as she did so it seemed to her that an icy wind from somewhere smote upon her cheek. It was like the breath of a spirit, cold and fleeting. She glanced about the room, but the door was closed and the curtains drawn.

The banjo she had brought upstairs with her lay near. Reaching forth her hand she picked it up and touched the strings. Then the thought came to her of how a tune, played in the middle of the night, would sound in her half-dark room.

A strange influence seemed to be upon her. Her fingers indeed touched the different chords, but without volition of her own they sounded the notes of an air she had never heard. Other fingers seemed to be upon her own, guiding them through the measure. The melody rose and fell and throbbed the air. Sounds at night can be heard so plainly that some one, awakened in a distant room, listened to the nocturnal music and wondered.

Mr. Kinlaw was entertaining his friend, Dr. Gardner, a few nights later at dinner, in his pleasant bachelor home.

The last course had been removed and a decanter, wine glasses, and cigars were placed upon the table.

Kinlaw watched the smoke-wreaths as they curled from his cigar, circling upward and melting away as he gazed.

"Death is a strange thing," he mused aloud, for they had just been talking upon this subject. "Our lives go out like this smoke from my cigar."

"It is hardly stranger that life itself," remarked the young physician. "Here you are and here I am, two separate and distinct human beings, each animated by a different soul, yet cast in the same likeness, so to speak, of the God who created us. The mere fact of drawing one's breath and filling the lungs with the air about us is wonderful, although the cessation of that breath and the severance of soul and body is strange in the extreme, I grant you. Do you believe in the reunion of two souls after death, Kinlaw?"

"That constitutes my only desire to inherit an eternal life hereafter. If I thought that two hearts which had throbbed together on this earth to love's perfect measure were to lie unrecognising, unresponsive, and passionless in our resurrected body, I would not care to live that life."

"Ah, we all know what a hard case it is with you," said Dr. Gardner, smiling.

When he walked towards his lodgings that night, Kinlaw accompanied him part of the way. They said good-night under the light of a corner lamp-post near the street in which Mr. Garstone's house stood. Jack resolved to walk by, hoping for nothing more than to catch the gleam of a light between the shutters of Hilda's window, for it was then ten o'clock.

Yet, when he reached the house the drawing-room was brightly illuminated; the shutters had not been closed and the curtains inside were still draped back at one of the windows, showing the interior.

Jack unlatched the gate and went up the path. This brought him in full view of the lighted window, showing him Miss Garstone's figure beside the fire. He thought at first she was alone, but presently a second figure was resolved from the shadows at the tall chair back.

With a certain degree of surprise Kinlaw saw that it was a man who leant above her, apparently listening while she played on her banjo.

Hesitating no longer about entering, he rang the bell and was shown into the drawing-room, to find his sweetheart alone.

"I am so glad you have come," was her greeting, as she moved towards him with a fair hand outstretched. "I have been quite lonely to-night."

"Not with your visitor, surely," said Jack, glancing around the room, then back into her lovely face.

"My visitor? I do not understand you. There is no one here."

Quick-tempered and unusually jealous where his affections were concerned, Mr. Kinlaw reddened resentfully at her evident evasion.

"There has been," he returned significantly.

"There has not."

Stepping to the curtain that separated the parlour from the library he thrust it aside with an indignant hand. No one was there.

"I see you do not believe me," said Hilda.

"If I had not seen it with my own eyes I might do so."

"What did you see?"

"A young man, tall and fair, leaning familiarly over your chair as I came up the path."

"There has been no one here," she reiterated, the tears rising to her eyes and glittering on her lashes.

"Hilda, how can you deceive me so when I love you as I do?" he exclaimed, in a sudden gust of passion.

His arms were half extended to her and she threw herself into their embrace. For an instant only he held her there, the soft gold of her hair touching his cheek; then his arms dropped from about her and a shadow settled over his face as he moved towards the door.

"Are you going?" she asked in alarm.

"I must."

"Oh, Jack, what do you mean? I have done nothing to anger you."

"Tell me the truth about the man I surely saw here a few moments ago. For our love's sake do not trifle with me. Acknowledge that such a person was with you; that is all I ask of you."

"There was no one," she said, with lips that would quiver in spite of her.

He scarcely waited to hear her faltered denial, and never even glanced at her anguished face or the little hands stretched forth to stay him as he went from the room and the house.

• • • • •

Kinlaw left England very suddenly after his misunderstanding with Hilda. Prevailing upon his friend, Dr. Gardner, to accompany him, he travelled untiringly through Canada, even in the bitter December weather. He had a half-defined purpose of going on to Vancouver and taking steamer for Japan, but Dr. Gardner persuaded him to abandon this idea and go with him to New York.

One wintry night found them in this metropolis, Kinlaw as moody as when his flying trip began. The doctor had been wonderfully patient with his friend, knowing that a rupture had occurred between him and Miss Garston, but unaware of the real cause.

The day following their arrival in New York Dr. Gardner was turning over the pages of a directory.

"I've a professional friend who is somewhere in the city," he said. "I must look him up and pay him a visit before we leave. Will you go with me?"

Kinlaw agreed indifferently, and that same evening saw them walking through a brisk fall of snowflakes on their way to Dr. Wilbar's.

This gentleman, somewhat older than his visitors, welcomed them with great cordiality. He ushered them into his study adjoining the consultation room, where a snug fire was burning brightly. The doctor seemed old-fashioned in his tastes; there were big cushioned chairs standing about, and before the grate a claw-legged table, on which stood a punch-bowl and cigars.

While the physicians smoked and talked, Kinlaw asked his host's permission to examine the curiosities contained in a cabinet near the book-shelves. He took little part in the conversation.

"Do not be afraid of stumbling upon a skeleton or a skull," said Dr. Wilba, laughing. "I don't even keep such things in my surgery. I have been a superstitious man since an event that happened in my life."

"What was it?" asked Gardner.

"I will tell you," returned the other. "You know I pursued my medical studies in Germany; but I don't think you are aware that I spent a year in Paris afterward. This experience I mentioned just now befel me there. I never was one of those people who believe in the supernatural.

"It always made me laugh to hear or read of a disembodied spirit revisiting this earth. I always thought I should be too glad to leave it ever to return, even if I possessed the power to do so. But now," he added, in that impressively slow voice which the narrator of a ghostly tale delights to assume, "I know that what I disbelieved in can be, although I think that it is only to certain mortals a spirit chances to be materialised. We all possess a slight degree of superstition in our make-up, sometimes unknowingly. Still, I don't expect you to believe what I'm going to tell you. I realise how fabulous it all sounds."

The doctor paused to light a fresh cigar before continuing.

"A medical student, a friend of mine, was engaged one night in that rather unpleasant occupation of dissecting a dead body, and I was assisting in the work. You need not ask me how we came by this particular subject; it is sufficient to say that it was a handsome man of no more than twenty-six, robust, and tall and fair.

"My friend, Ventries, was a queer fellow, an Englishman, with nerves like steel. He was the very man to be a surgeon. He even disdained to wear gloves while at such work, and no accident ever happened from this omission that I know of.

"It was this fellow who wagered, the night I speak of, that he would cover a fine banjo frame he chanced to own with the skin from the broad chest of the man we were cutting up. I said he couldn't do it; that it would be next to impossible to bring human skin to such a state that it would make the sounding-piece of a banjo.

"He assured me that by certain means known to him he was able to thin and toughen the skin until it could bear the strain put on it, and also to render it sonorous to the touch when stretched. I was still incredulous, but, gentlemen, he did it."

"That is certainly rather hard to believe," interpolated Dr. Gardner.

"Did you never hear of the manufacture of gloves from human skin practised at one time in France? When Ventries' banjo was actually refitted with that ghastly skin a strange thing took place. The instrument became haunted."

"Now, you are joking," said the other.

"I am speaking the absolute truth. The spirit of that man, whom our scalpels had mutilated, ever hovered about the banjo that bore part of his body."

"Did you have ocular proof of it?"

"I saw the man, or rather his wraith, once, and I can vouch for the peculiar effect the banjo had upon its owner. He became strangely attached to it. Once he sold it to some acquaintance and straightway bought it back again, paying more than he sold it for. I imagine the friend was only too glad to let him have it back."

"Did you say the man's name was Richard Ventries?" asked Kinlaw, leaning forward, his face working strangely.

"I didn't say Richard, but that was his given name."

"Was he dumb?"

"By some frightful accident he had lost his tongue. I never asked him about it—he was so sensitive with regard to his misfortune."

"Tell me how and when you saw the banjo's ghost, as you term it," urged Kinlaw, eagerly.

The doctor puffed placidly at his cigar, then answered:—

"It was one night when I went up to Ventries' room for some purpose. Through the half-open door I saw him picking his everlasting banjo in his clever, amateurish style. A tall, fair young fellow leaned over the back of his chair, as if listening to the music. I saw his face distinctly in the firelight. It was that of the man whose body I had helped to dissect a few months before.

"To another he would have appeared like an ordinary man. When I entered the room no one but Ventries was there. He laughed when I told him. He had never seen it himself, but had felt the presence, I doubt not."

Kinlaw's face was white as the snow on the window-ledge without.

"What has become of Ventries!" he asked.

"He returned to England when I came back to America. I don't know his whereabouts now. He was always a roving fellow."

"Did he take his banjo with him?"

"Oh, yes, I remember seeing it among his things.'

"Gardner," exclaimed Kinlaw, springing up abruptly, "I must start for home at once!"

Dr. Gardner did not question the motive which prompted his friend to such a determination.

He left with him by the first steamer, and in little more than a week the two travellers were at home, and Kinlaw, without stopping to enter his own house, was on his way to the Garstones.

A new servant opened the door for him.

"Miss Garstone—is she in? Tell her Mr. Kinlaw would like to see her."

"You must have been away from town, sir, not to have heard. Miss Garstone died last Saturday and was buried on Monday."

• • • • • •

Kinlaw got home somehow. He marvelled that the sun still shone in the mid-winter sky. It seemed to him that it should go on in darkness and the heavens be black as that day which shall mark the wrath of God. He found a package for him on reaching his room. It was directed in an unfamiliar hand. Within was the emerald ring that had sealed his engagement: a slip of paper twisted round it bore some writing he knew, though the characters were faintly traced

There were only three words: "I was true."

Some months ago, an Oregon, U.S.A., man, named his girl baby after Queen Victoria, and wrote to the Queen to that effect. Not hearing from her Majesty, he changed the child's name to Hannah, and went out and pounded the first Englishman he met.

Polly had been looking at a mountain brook and thinking very deeply about it for some time.

"Come, Polly, let's go home now," said the nurse.

"Wait just a minute, please," replied Polly. "I want to see the end of this brook go by."

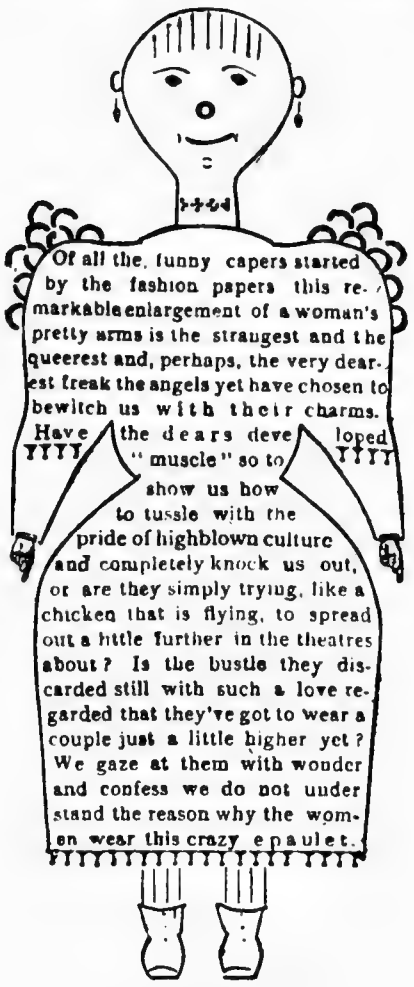
Sympathising friend: "Why, my dear, what's the matter?"

The Mourner: "Oh, oh, oh! My husband's going to South America."

Sympathising Friend: "Well, my poor dear, don't cry. It might be worse you know."

The Mourner: "No, it couldn't—I have to go with him!"

THE BUSTLES ON THE ARMS.



Obliging Country Butcher: "Let me cut it into cutlets for you, ma'am—leaving just enough bone for you to hold 'em by, while you're eating 'em."

A wicked boy killed his father and mother, and was duly found guilty. "We ask for leniency in the sentence, your Lordship," said the lawyer for the defence. "On what ground?" gruffly asked the Judge. "Your Lordship, the defendant is an orphan."

She: "Why—er—really, Mr. Champlain, the idea of my marrying you is very unexpected."

He: "I am so glad!"

She: "So glad?"

He: "Yes; because the unexpected always happens."

A frog fell into a pail of milk recently, and in the morning was found sitting upon a roll of butter. A local paper says that "the sole explanation is that, in trying to extricate himself, he had, by diligent and continuous strokes of his hind legs, churned the milk into butter."

A Scientific Paper justly denounces the habit of visitors kissing the baby, and thus possibly conveying infection to it. A strictly pathological view of the subject leads to the belief that the best way is to kiss the mother, when she is young and pretty, and let her give it to the infant.

Furniture Dealer (to elderly maiden): "And there is another advantage, ma'am, which the folding-bed has over the ordinary kind."

Elderly Maiden: "What is that, sir?"

Furniture Dealer: "You don't have to look under it to see if there is a man there."

Old Lady (to chemist): "I want a box of canine pills."

Chemist: "What's the matter with the dog?"

Old Lady (indignantly): "I want you to know, sir, that my husband is a gentleman!"

Chemist puts up some quinine pills in profound silence.

One day this week we were dining at a Strand restaurant noted for its excellent cookery and bad waiting. At the next table sat a middle-aged gentleman and his little son, the latter endeavouring to assuage the pangs of hunger by devouring bread. At last, his patience quite exhausted, the little fellow said, "Papa, why don't you kick up a jolly row, the same as you do at home?"

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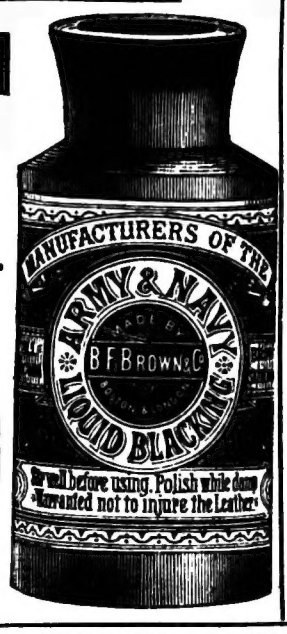

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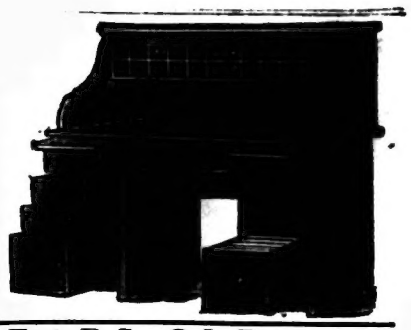

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YOUR Name in neat Rubber Type, your Monogram, bottle of Endorsing Ink, two Pads, Box, and Ink Distributor for **9d.**, post free; with Marking Ink, **1s. 3d.** Nickel Silver Pen and Pencil Case with Name Stamp, **6d.** Nickel Silver Name and Address Stamp, **9d.** Watch Case, beautifully chased, with Name and Address Stamp, **1s**; and every other description of Rubber Stamp half price. Send for List. Agents Wanted.—Address to **CRYSTAL PALACE (JOHN BOND'S DAUGHTER'S) GOLD MEDAL MARKING INK WORKS, 75, Southgate Road, London, N.**

CAUTION.—The Original and Genuine Ink Label has the trade mark—"CRYSTAL PALACE."

BALD MEN!

Why expose yourself to public derision, or waste money on so-called "hair Restorers," "Hair Producers," and other catch-penny advertisements claiming impossible virtues for their "One preparation Cure everything" nostrums? Premature Baldness in Men is due to congestion of the Hair follicles. My "**EAU HORN**" (Regis.) removes this Celebrated Morbid Condition, renews the organic action in the follicles, and provides food for the bulbs, insuring a luxuriant Head of Hair, **even on quite Bald Heads**, provided a fine "down" is still visible. Pamphlet of 100 Testimonials free; over 300 Press Notices. Recommended by Dr. T. R. Allinson, Dr. J. Groves, Dr. Rev. E. Davies, Dr. Devar, etc., etc.

"**EAU HORN**," the Cure for Baldness, is sent post free for 5s., abroad 1s. 6d. extra, from

O. E. HORN, D.Sc., Hair Specialist, *From the Isle of Wight Skin Hospital*, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT.

London Agents: CASSIE & CO., 49, Newgate Street.

N.B.—This being a Genuine Remedy, no Coupons are issued.

STEEDMAN'S SOOTHING POWDERS

For CHILDREN CUTTING TEETH.

IN USE OVER 50 YEARS

ASK THAT "JOHN STEEDMAN, CHEMIST, WALWORTH, SURREY," is engraved on the GOVERNMENT STAMP AFFIXED TO EACH PACKET.

SYMINGTON'S

WORLD RENOWNED

HIGH PRESSURE STEAM PREPARED PEA FLOUR

PEA SOUP SEASONED AND FLAVOURED

In Tins and Packets

SOLD EVERYWHERE

EXPORT AGENT: J. T. MORTON, LONDON.

POSITIVELY THE BEST HAIR DRESSING FOR STRENGTHENING, BEAUTIFYING, AND PRESERVING THE HAIR.

EDWARDS' "HARLENE"

WORLD-RENOWNED

HAIR PRODUCER AND RESTORER.

Used by Thousands Daily.

Its Superiority is Unsurpassed.

EDWARDS' "HARLENE"

POSITIVELY FORCES

LUXURIANT HAIR, Whiskers, and Moustachios

To grow heavily in a few weeks, without injury to the skin, and no matter at what age.

THE WORLD-RENOWNED REMEDY

FOR BALDNESS

From whatever cause arising. As a Producer of

Whiskers and Moustachios

It has never been equalled. As a Curer of Weak or Thin Eyelashes,

Or Restoring Grey Hair

To its Natural Colour, never fails.

PHYSICIANS AND ANALYSTS PRONOUNCE IT TO BE PERFECTLY HARMLESS AND DEVOID OF ANY METALLIC OR OTHER INJURIOUS INGREDIENT.

1s., 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. per Bottle, from Chemists, Hairdressers, and Perfumers all over the world, or sent direct on receipt of 1s. 4d., 2s. 10d., 3s. 11d., and 5s. Postal Orders preferred.

ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE BEST.

"Dear Sir,—After trying several hair producers and giving yours a fair trial, I must acknowledge it to be the best. "S. BENNETT.
"19, Gloucester Place, Liverpool."

AN EXCELLENT HAIR DRESSING.

"Sir,—Kindly forward another bottle of 'Harlene.' I like it immensely. I think it an excellent dressing for the hair, and prefer it to any other. "Mrs. ROSE.
"Lower Heywood, Banbury, Oxon."

AN ANXIOUS FATHER SATISFIED.

"Sir,—I am pleased to testify to the efficacy of your 'Harlene.' My little boy (11 years old) has had a bald place on the back of his head from his birth. I applied the 'Harlene' to the place daily, and the result has been most satisfactory."

Name and address suppressed if desired. Original may be seen.

NOTHING SO EFFECTUAL AS EDWARDS' "HARLENE"

"Dear Sir, I am very pleased to say that your 'Harlene' is taking effect upon my hair. Have tried several remedies, but none have proved so effectual as Edwards' 'Harlene.' "E. RICKET.
"365, High Road, Gunnersbury."

A WONDERFUL DISCOVERY.

"Dear Sir, Yours is indeed a wonderful discovery. I have used one bottle, and can detect an improvement in my hair already. Please send another bottle. "W. A. RUDSTEAD.
"46, Handsworth Street, Glasgow."

EDWARDS' VIOLETTA.

The World renowned Skin Tonic.

A CLEAR & BEAUTIFUL COMPLEXION.

Pimples, Freckles, Black Specks, Sunburns, Scurf, Roughness, and all unsightly blemishes on the face, neck, hands and arms, rapidly and permanently cured by EDWARDS' VIOLETTA. Perfectly harmless, and pleasant to use. This remarkable preparation should be tried by all. Small-pox Marks, Moles, Freckles, Ringworms, etc., yield immediately. It attacks those unsightly, irritable, and unpleasant affections, and always imparts a delightful and natural loveliness to the skin.

1s. 1½d. & 2s. 9d. per Bottle. Postage, 3d. extra.

MANUFACTURED ONLY BY **EDWARDS & CO., 95, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.**

TIRED OF MUSTN'TS.

I'm sick of "mustn'ts," said Dorothy D.,
Sick of "mustn't's" as I can be.

From early morning till the close of day
I hear a "mustn't" and never a "may."
Its "You mustn't lie there like a sleepy head,"
And "You mustn't sit up when its time for bed";
"You mustn't cry when I comb your curls,"
"You mustn't play with those noisy girls";
"You mustn't be silent when spoken to,"
"You mustn't chatter as parrots do";
"You mustn't be pert and you mustn't be proud"?
"You mustn't giggle or laugh aloud";
"You mustn't rumple your nice clean dress";
"You mustn't nod in place of a 'yes.'"

So all day long the mustn'ts go,
Till I dream at night of an endless row
Of goblin "mustn'ts" with great big eye
That stare at me in shocked surprise.

Oh! I hope I shall live to see the day
When some one will say to me, "Dear, you may";
For I'm sick of "mustn'ts," said Dorothy D.;
Sick of "mustn'ts" as I can be.

AN INTRUSIVE EGG.

Will McConnell, now manager of the Brooklyn Theatre, New York, once supported McCullough the actor. The "star" was playing Virginius, and upon clasping his hand upon that of McConnell, who had just made an heroic stage speech, he found that the audacious young scamp had left a cold hard-boiled egg in it.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the speech McConnell "retired up," leaving McCullough purple with rage, egg in hand, and perfectly helpless as to what to do with it. He was "on" for at least twenty minutes; there was no pocket in his toga or in his tights; his "business" was in the centre of the stage, and he was simply bewildered.

The unhappy tragedian delivered heroic after heroic, egg in hand, growling anathemas *sotto voce* against the author of his misfortune; but he could not get rid of the egg. When at last he made his exit, he flew to McConnell's room to kill him then and there, but that wise young person was perched by this time in the flies, chuckling over the futile rage of the "star," who an hour later laughed heartily at his own discomfiture.

LEFT ON THE FIELD.

I did not feel the slightest pain when struck by two bullets at the same instant. We were charging forward, most of the men hurrahing as they swept into the clouds of smoke raised by the two guns, when there came such a sensation as one feels when his foot has gone to sleep.

This sensation extended to the entire body, and I lurched about, staggered forward a few steps, and then fell to the ground. One bullet had entered the right leg just below the hip, the other had smashed into the left shoulder.

I was dimly conscious of the fact that I was down, but I could not realise that I had been hit. It was a dreamy sensation. The roar of battle was subdued, the shouts of men seemed to come from miles away, and I felt too tired to speculate on what was happening around me.

By-and-bye I went to sleep. I had noticed the sun just as we moved forward. It was within half-an-hour of setting. When I awoke it was night, and the stars were twinkling brightly. My throat was as parched as if I had been without drink for days, and my tongue seemed to be a stick in my mouth. I sat up, got hold of my canteen, which was full of water, and drained it to the last drop.

What had happened? Away down on the left a single gun was firing at intervals, and here and there was a splutter of musketry. I found it hard to reflect, but after a time it slowly dawned on me that there had been a battle.

When did I fall out of the ranks, and why? Where was the regiment? Who are these men lying about on the ground? Let's see. Yes, this is a battlefield. We were held in reserve until mid-afternoon. Then we formed battle line along a ridge covered with bushes. We pushed down the slope to a stream—over the creek to the edge of a field.

They got a couple of guns to enfilade us and we—we——Let's see. Our regiment got the order to charge. I had just filled my canteen. We fixed bayonets lying down. I remember that we sprang up and rushed forward, and I remember falling. Did I trip or stumble?

"You there! Are you badly hit?"

I came out of my stupor as a dream is broken. I was sitting up still holding my empty canteen. The soldier who had spoken was lying on his elbow ten feet away. He had been shot in the knee.

"Can you crawl?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then get a canteen from one of those dead men for me."

I made a move, and then for the first time felt the pain of my wounds, and realised that I was helpless. The knowledge frightened me, and I began to shout for help. The wounded man laughed at me. His paroxysm had passed away while I was lying in the stupor.

"Keep quiet!" he commanded, as he began to move himself toward me. "If you call out in that way some ghoul will come along and knock you on the head!"

My fright passed away as he drew nearer. There was a dead man between us. He stopped and secured the poor fellow's canteen, and as he reached me, drawing himself along on his back by the use of one leg, we drained it between us. I had not recognised his voice, but I found that he belonged to my own company."

"How many bodies can you count?" he asked, as he tossed the empty canteen away.

"Seven, I think."

"That was a shell, and we got badly dosed. All of our company, too. Can you reach that musket? Some prowler may come along here, and we ought to be ready for him."

We were looking into the darkness and listening when he began to laugh. I laughed with him. Two minutes later we were both weeping. Then he started to sing, and I joined in. We realised that we laughed, cried, and sang, but we could not control ourselves. He began to tell of the battle, but I got angry and called him a liar. He would have struck me, but just then we caught sight of a ghoul silently approaching.

"Ah, you brute, I'll settle you!" shouted my comrade, as he raised the musket.

The ghoul ran away, and both of us laughed heartily. Then we wept again. All of a sudden he began singing. And I joined in with great heartiness. We were singing at the top of our voices when a party of three or four having a lantern and a stretcher suddenly appeared.

ICE-YACHTING.

There is no sport the excitement of which is so thrilling and whose records of speed are so wonderful as that of ice-yachting. Ice-boats are to be found on the lakes and rivers of the Northern States of the American Union; but their favourite cruising-ground is on those great expanses of ice on the upper and middle Hudson. Here the principal ice-yacht clubs are located.

The ice-boat is a racing machine pure and simple. Its hull—if the few timbers forming that spider-like structure can be so called—is put together in such a manner as to obtain the greatest possible strength consistent with lightness. Every village along the great river appears to have a few of these boats. The season for the sport rarely lasts over thirty days, and some winters afford but a week of good racing weather.

Of course there are many fine days scattered through the season, which the individual ice-boat enthusiast watches for and takes prompt advantage of. The main obstacles to the sport are light winds, rough ice, and snow. Accidents are rare, and it is seldom that any more serious harm comes to the sportsman than a thorough ducking or a frost-bitten hand or nose.

The most serious accidents occur from collisions where the boats meet on opposite tacks, or when one, stopped suddenly by some unforeseen obstruction, is run into by another too closely following its course. The authentic runs of some of these boats are really marvellous. Swift express-trains are frequently overtaken and passed as if they were at rest. A mile a minute is often made by the fliers.

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

As often as not Christmas Day may be the hottest in the year, as December is generally the hottest month. At this season all the well-to-do inhabitants of Cape Colony, and of the Free State, and of the Transvaal, from many hundred of miles "up country," repair to the seaside, where every house has been engaged for weeks past, and where many of the wealthier classes have houses of their own.

At Christmastide the seaside hotels are crowded to their utmost capacity. The Christmas Day festivities, therefore, do not extend much beyond the change in the *menu* and the cherished exchanges of cards and greetings and loving remembrances which prevail the world over.

Except where the German element prevails one does not hear much of Christmas trees, the main desire of parents being to get their children out of doors as soon as the noontide heat subsides.

In Natal, in commemoration of its discovery on Christmas Day, and in the surrounding eastern provinces, the season is more enthusiastically celebrated, especially among the Roman Catholics. Otherwise, even there, where so many mixed races form the population, and where the coloured folk are as ten to one, and where the heat is destructive of any superfluous energy, a Christmas greeting is of a somewhat languid character.

Even in the matter of decorations feeble are the attempts, and yet the abounding beauty and richness of the flora at this season passes description. Nothing less than a list from some horticultural or botanical work would suffice to give an idea of it. On the mountain sides are flowers of surpassing beauty, handsful of which, and of various kinds, may be gathered in a few minutes.

There are now in bloom the several species of the large star-like everlasting flowers, some pink, others white or red, which are brought in cartloads and packed for the English markets. They are about the size of asters. These, together with the many beautiful grasses, are familiar to the frequenters of Covent Garden market and the London florists, but are to be had here for the gathering.

Then abundant in the gardens are heliotrope bushes big enough for birds to build their nests in. The magnolia is also in bloom, and the attrea, with splendid scarlet blossoms. These latter seem to be never out of bloom, and are as common as our lilac trees in spring, but much larger. As common as our laurels or the wild privæt, are myrtle, various cacti, and opuntias (the prickly pear), all now in bloom. And there are thick hedges of heliotrope or of pomegranate, or of white jasmine with fragrant flowers.

Next, a perfect grove of crimson oleanders, tall enough for seats under their shade, or white ones, and some with variegated leaves. The next garden may be hedged with geraniums, having strong, wooded, shrub-like stems, and of brilliant colours; while all along the roads the plumbago of our hothouses imparts a lovely blue to the hedges and foreground. One seems to walk deferentially amid such choice plants, which, after all, are only wild ones, and may be "pulled" by the armful.

And these are only a few, a very few, of the roadside shrubs, while the banks are as brilliant in their way, and many tall trees are now as laden with bright blossoms as our horse chestnuts in May.

THE FIDDLER'S ODE.

Torn
Worn
Oppressed I mourn
Bad
Sad
Three-quarters mad
Money gone
Credit none
Duns at door
Half a score
Wife a bane
Twins again
Others ailing
Nurse a railing
Billy hooping
Betsy crouping
Besides poor Joe
With injured toe.
Come, then, my Fiddle,
Come, my time-worn friend,
With gay and brilliant sounds
Some sweet though transient solace lend.
Thy polished neck in close embrace
I clasp, while joy illumes my face.
When o'er thy strings I draw my bow,
My drooping spirit pants to rise;
A lively strain I touch—and lo!
I seem to mount above the skies.
There on Fancy's wing I soar,
Heedless of the duns at door;
Oblivious all! I feel my woes no more;
But skip o'er the strings,
As my old Fiddle sings,
"Cheerily, oh! merrily go!
"Presto! good master,
"You very well know,
"I will find music.
"If you will find bow.
"From E up in alto, to G down below."
Fatigued, I pause to change the time
For some *Adagio*, solemn and sublime.
With graceful action moves the sinuous arm;
My heart responsive to the soothing charm,
Throbs equally; whilst every health-corroding care
Lies prostrate, vanquished by the soft mellifluous air.
More and more plaintive grown, my eyes with tears o'erflow,
And Resignation mild soon smooths my wrinkled brow,
Reedy Hautboy may squeak, wailing Flauto may squall,
The Serpent may grunt, and the Trombone may bawl;
But, by Poll, my old Fiddle's the prince of them all.
Could e'en Dryden return, thy praise to rehearse,
His Ode to Cecilia would seem rugged verse.
Now to thy case, in flannel warm to lie,
Till call'd again to pipe thy master's eye.

SEARCH LIGHT.

3d. PEARSON'S MONTHLY. **3d.**

Edited by C. Arthur Pearson.

Search Light gives every month for threepence more readable matter than any of the sixpenny or shilling magazines. The matter consists of articles, stories, and poems selected from the most prominent papers that are published in every language of the civilised world.

It is needless to say anything with regard to the quality of this matter beyond making the plain statement that *Search Light* has a larger circulation in the United Kindom than that of any other magazine published, with one exception, and this in spite of the fact that *Search Light* is not yet a year old.

Commencing with the November issue, which appeared on November 1st, each ordinary number of *Search Light* is accompanied by a beautifully executed coloured plate. The series to which these belong will continue for twelve months.

Search Light is always on sale on the first of the month and may be obtained at any Bookstall or Newsagent in exchange for a threepenny bit.

How to Bring Back The Colour of Your Hair With Perfect Safety.

A VALUABLE AID TO PERSONAL BEAUTY.

French women give more time and attention to the hair than English; if their hair begins to turn grey or fade, or if it has been bleached and they are tired of the colour and want to change it, they have a preparation to use which, strange to say, is not made in France, but in New York.

If your hair is now in a state of nature, only turning grey, and you want it back to its original colour, that is easy whatever the shade, in short, it can be regenerated.

If your hair has been spoilt by dyeing, and you want it brought to an uniform colour and freshness, it can be done.

If your hair has been bleached and is now faded and lifeless, and youwant it a rich auburn, brown, or gold blonde, glossy and fresh again, it can be done.

If the colour of your hair is too light to be to your liking, and you would have it one or two shades darker, so that the change of colour seems, and is, a natural deepening of tint, it can be done.

If any part of your hair differs in colour from any other portions, "The Imperial Hair Regenerator" will render it uniform for you.

If you wear or wish to supplement your natural hair by a switch, band, or fringe, then "The Imperial Hair Regenerator" will colour the addition to the exact shade you desire to match.

The Imperial Hair Regenerator" is not to be confounded with the dyes, restorers, venators ordinarily sold; it is a great chemical bride forward, and surpasses g else as much as the electric light is above the common candle. There is y nothing else like it. "The Imperial Hair Regenerator" proceeds upon of supplying the colouring matter for the hair, and is manufactured in seven nd ranging from raven black to ash blonde. It is a perfect hair regenerator (not a dye), tonic, harmless, clean, odourless, imperceptible, and lasting, without a trace of greasiness. It will even restore lost vitality to bleached hair, and colour it to any desired shade. It makes the hair soft and glossy, and improves the texture; it brings back grey hair to the natural colour of youth, and yet, withal, remains unaffected by perspiration, baths (Turkish, Russia, or sea bathing); does not interfere with curling and crimping, and has received the endorsement of physicians that it is perfectly safe to use.

The texture is brightened and softened; the colour is natural. There is not a trace of grease or smell. It cannot possibly harm eyes, skin, hair, or brain. "The Imperial Hair Regenerator" defies detection by the closest observer in the broad, bright sunlight. Detection! There is simply nothing to detect.

What Madame Patti herself says about her hair:—

"Hoffman House, New York, *April 24th*, 1890.

"To the Imperial Chemical Manufacturing Co.

"Gentlemen,—So much has been said in the newspapers about the colour of my hair, I deem it but just to say it is your Imperial Hair Regenerator which I have been and am now using. I found the Court Hair-dresser in London was applying it to ladies in high social positions, and I first had it applied by him, and now, during my stay in New York, have had the application renewed by you. The result has been beyond my highest expectation. The colour obtained is most beautiful, uniform, and best of all, I find it harmless. Your preparation has my cordial recommendation. I believe there is nothing in the world for the hair like it.

Adelina Patti Nicolini

PRICES:—6s. 6d. and 13s. per bottle, post free. The large size contains three times the quantity of the other, and is, therefore, recommended for economy, because it permits of a supply for the purpose of occasionally touching up the as the hair grows out. State the colour required or forward with order small men of natural hair. There are seven shades:—No. 1, Black; No. 2, Dark Brown; , Medium Brown; No. 4, Chestnut; No. 5, Light Chestnut (Titian Red); No. 6, Blonde; No. 7, Ash Blonde. Either size sent, post free, on receipt of remittance. oreign countries large size only sent, carriage paid, for 15s. All parcels ed free from observation, and all correspondence treated confidentially. Inspection ed. Address—

THE IMPERIAL CHEMICAL COMPANY,
4 and 5 Creed Lane, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.

ordering, plea e name this paper. *Descriptive Pamphlet on applicati n.*

NATURE AND LIFE

ACCIDENT, CLOUD, STORM, AND SUNBEST OF HONESTY OF PURPOSE.

SYMPATHY is a warm focus of Love, a nest that forms round a Good Man's Heart, the Noblest and Fairest Quality of Life.

HONESTY OF PURPOSE is above the World, and SUPERIOR TO ALL EVENTS.

NOBLE EXAMPLES SET BY THE GREAT AND GOOD DO NOT DIE.

"The First Test of a Truly Great Man is his Humility."—RUSKIN.

THE CHRISTMAS CAROL.
The drying up of a single tear has more of honest Fame than shedding Seas of Gore.

"It is very characteristic of the late Prince Consort—*a man himself of the purest mind, who powerfully impressed and influenced others by sheer force of his own benevolent nature*—when drawing up the conditions of the annual prize to be given by Her Majesty at Wellington College, to determine that it should be awarded **Not to the Cleverest Boy, nor the most Bookish Boy, nor to the most Precise, Diligent, and Prudent Boy, but to the Noblest Boy, to the Boy who should show the most promise of becoming a Large Hearted, High-Motived Man.**—*Smiles.*

As Time rolls his ceaseless course, Christmas after Christmas comes round and we find our joys and sorrows left behind; so we build up the being that we are.

What makes a Happy Christmas? Health, and the things we love, and those who love us?

What higher aim can man attain than conquest over human pain?

EVERY TRAVELLING TRUNK AND HOUSEHOLD OUGHT TO CONTAIN A BOTTLE OF

ENO'S "FRUIT SALT."

It is not too much to say that its merits have been published, tested, and approved literally from pole to pole, and that its cosmopolitan popularity to day presents one of the most signal illustrations of commercial enterprise to be found in our trading records."—EUROPEAN MAIL.

IMPORTANT to all leaving Home for a change.—Don't go without a bottle of ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." It ought to be kept in every bedroom, in readiness for any emergency. It prevents Diarrhœa, and removes it in its early stages.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.—STERLING HONESTY OF PURPOSE.—WITHOUT IT LIFE IS A SHAM! "A new invention is brought before the public and commands success. A score of *abominable imitations* are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—*Adam.*

CAUTION.—Examine each bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." *Without it you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation.*

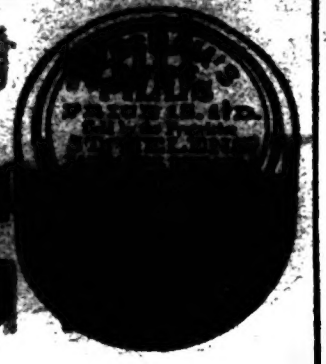
PREPARED ONLY AT ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" WORKS, HATCHAM, LONDON, S.E., by J. C. ENO

THIS FACT REALLY OCCURRED.

"*Last Sunday week at the Church of the Liverpool Blind Institute there was a very large congregation, and of course much coughing. Immediately the minister had announced his text there was a perfect volley of coughs. As soon as it had ceased the reverend gentleman commenced, as was thought, his discourse, but, to the astonishment of all, said, 'After all, the old-fashioned remedies are the best, and* KEATING'S LOZENGES *are an excellent thing for coughs. If next Sunday you will all bring* KEATING'S LOZENGES *with you to church we shall not have the annoyance of these coughs, and the sufferers themselves will derive great comfort.' This practical sermon appears to have been appreciated, as there was 'quite a run' upon 'Keating's Lozenges,' no doubt to the complete satisfaction of the reverend gentleman.*"—Extract from the "Family Doctor" of April 2nd, 1892.

THOMAS KEATING begs to remind the Public that these Lozenges have been sold for over 70 years, and the sale is increasing yearly. They are unrivalled in the treatment of **Winter Cough, Throat and Chest Irritation.** One alone gives relief. Price 1s. 1½d. each tin, all the world over.

THE BEST OF ALL CHRISTMAS BOXES



CONTAINING THE

KEY TO HEALTH!!

BEECHAM'S PILLS
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Are universally admitted to be worth a Guinea a box for Bilious and Nervous Disorders, such as Wind and Pain in the Stomach, Sick Headache, Giddiness, Fulness and Swelling after Meals, Dizziness and Drowsiness, Cold Chills, Flushings of Heat, Loss of Appetite, Shortness of Breath, Costiveness, Scurvy, Blotches on the Skin, Disturbed Sleep, Frightful Dreams, and all Nervous and Trembling Sensations, &c. The first dose will give relief in twenty minutes. This is no fiction, for they have done it in countless cases. Every sufferer is earnestly invited to try one Box of these Pills, and they will be acknowledged to be

WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

For Females of all ages these Pills are invaluable, as a few doses of them carry off all humours, open all obstructions, and bring about all that is required. No female should be without them. There is no medicine to be found to equal Beecham's Pills for removing any obstruction or irregularity of the system. If taken according to the directions given with each box, they will soon restore females of all ages to sound and robust health. This has been proved by thousands who have tried them, and found the benefits which are ensured by their use.

For a weak stomach, impaired digestion, and all disorders of the liver, they act like magic, and a few doses will be found to work wonders upon the most important organs in the human machine. They strengthen the whole muscular system, restore the long-lost complexion, bring back the keen edge of appetite, and arouse into action, with the rosebud of health, the whole physical energy of the human frame. These are FACTS testified continually by members of all classes of society, and one of the best guarantees to the Nervous and Debilitated is,

Beecham's Pills have the Largest Sale of any Patent Medicine in the World.

Prepared by **THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire,** *and sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere, in Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. Full Directions given with each Box.*

BEECHAM'S TOOTH PASTE

will recommend itself; it is efficacious, economical, cleanses the teeth, perfumes the breath, removes tartar, and prevents decay. It is composed of the best known ingredients for neutralising the acids of the mouth, preventing all deleterious deposits upon the teeth, and is a pleasant and reliable dentifrice.

BEECHAM'S TOOTH PASTE *is put up in collapsible tubes, perfectly air-tight, and so adjustable that no waste need occur; the packages are pretty for the toilet table, and most convenient for the travelling bag. Of all Druggists, or from the Proprietor, for ONE SHILLING, postage paid.*